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**Author** Angela Lin

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**Abstract**

Brands are no longer isolated entities that only represent the products they offer; now they are often closely associated to their environmental contexts, cultures, and shared values. This presents a challenge for companies that are experienced in their domestic markets but desire to expanding globally, as the strong cultural connotations they have worked so hard to form may become lost in translation. The brand that this study focuses on is Iittala, a premium Scandinavian home goods brand owned by the company, Fiskars.

This thesis aims to explore the methods of storytelling that are effective in brand communication and education for international brands such as Iittala, when expanding globally. To this end, this study looks specifically into the Asia-Pacific, a market of interest, to explore the qualities of Scandinavian design and products that appeal to its consumers. Furthermore, this thesis seeks to determine ways for brands to better understand its international customers.

The research was conducted with a purpose of understanding the perspectives of the key players, including the local store clerks, the target consumers, and management. Literature reviews and ethnographic interviews were employed, as well as in-store observations and shadowing at various Iittala retail locations.

The results indicated a need for rapid response to the ever-changing needs of Asia-Pacific consumers, and the need for a better understanding of their customers' shopping behaviours in order to align the brand's retail strategies. This study will propose a re-designed customer journey that incorporates the MyIittala platform as a tool of data collection, and offer a method of introducing this initiative through the implementation of a pop-up pavilion.

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**Keywords** retail, strategy, customer journey

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# BEYOND THE POINT OF PURCHASE:

CONVEYING BRAND VALUES THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL RETAILING

A CASE STUDY OF THE IITTALA BRAND

ANGELA LIN / MASTER OF ARTS THESIS / PRODUCT AND SPATIAL DESIGN

/ SCHOOL OF ARTS, DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE / AALTO UNIVERSITY

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A Case Study of the Iittala Brand

Angela Lin  
Master of Arts Thesis  
Product and Spatial Design  
School of Arts, Design and Architecture  
Aalto University

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Brands are no longer isolated entities that only represent the products they offer; now they are often closely associated to their environmental contexts, cultures, and shared values. This presents a challenge for companies that are experienced in their domestic markets but desire to expanding globally, as the strong cultural connotations they have worked so hard to form may become lost in translation. The brand that this study focuses on is Iittala, a premium Scandinavian home goods brand owned by the company, Fiskars.

This thesis aims to explore the methods of storytelling that are effective in brand communication and education for international brands such as Iittala, when expanding globally. To this end, this study looks specifically into the Asia-Pacific, a market of interest, to explore the qualities of Scandinavian design and products that appeal to its consumers. Furthermore, this thesis seeks to determine ways for a brand to better understand its international customers.

The research was conducted with a purpose of understanding the perspectives of the key players, including the local store clerks, the target consumers, and management. Literature reviews and ethnographic interviews were employed, as well as in-store observations and shadowing at various Iittala retail locations.

The results indicated a need for rapid responses to the ever-changing needs of Asia-Pacific consumers, and the need for a better understanding of their customers' shopping behaviours in order to align the brand's retail strategies. This study will propose a re-designed customer journey that incorporates the MyIittala platform as a tool of data collection, and offer a method of introducing this initiative through the implementation of a pop-up pavilion.

## 1.0

## INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Project Intention

Nowadays when we speak about a brand it is inevitable that myriads of associations are triggered alongside the brand's actual offerings. In an article of the Journal of International Marketing, Cayla and Arnold suggest that brands should be considered as cultural forms. "To talk of brands as cultural forms is to acknowledge that branding is a specific form of communication, which tells stories in the context of products and services, addresses people as consumers, and promises to fulfill unmet desires and needs. In other words, branding is a specific symbolic form, a particular way of talking about and seeing the world." (Cayla and Arnould, 2008)

This thesis began in a conversation with Fiskars regarding their brand, Iittala, and how consumers in the Asia-Pacific perceive it in the global market. As a brand deeply rooted in Finnish heritage and surrounded by layers upon layers of stories which have built a varied but strong set of values, Iittala is widely known and ubiquitous throughout the homes of its domestic market. While this makes the brand's future endeavors of storytelling within Finland and Scandinavia much more efficient, it presents a challenge when the brand tries to expand its reach globally. The strategy taken has to vastly differ from the one employed in their home market, since the built-in brand knowledge and cultural understandings are no longer in place as a foundation.

*“To talk of brands as cultural forms is to acknowledge that branding is a specific form of communication, which tells stories in the context of products and services, addresses people as consumers, and promises to fulfill unmet desires and needs. In other words, branding is a specific symbolic form, a particular way of talking about and seeing the world.”*

- Cayla and Arnould

littala must establish new connections with their international consumers, and understand them in order to communicate with them. This thesis will explore the possible methods of brand storytelling in the global context, and strive to propose a new retail solution for littala when it comes to achieving greater success in its international locations. Although the aim is to view littala’s global retail strategy as a whole, the majority of the research and proposals are targeted towards the Asia-Pacific market, especially China, due to the fact that it is one of the largest retail markets in the world, with a projected rapid future growth.

There thesis will all feature an in-depth review of the future of retail, and what digitalization means for the brick-and-mortar store. With online shopping and e-commerce making up a substantial amount of retail sales, it is important that “stores of the future will function as intensive, immersive storytellers that can convey a brand’s history, attributes and future vision. Allowing the brand to say more about itself than just presenting the product.” (Pasquarelli, 2016) littala must also look to the future needs and desires of its consumers in order to provide online and offline retail channels that are relevant and attractive. Therefore the underlying purpose behind this thesis becomes this: Understanding littala’s global consumers and their behavior in order to align the brand’s retail strategies.

## 1.2 Thesis Questions

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This thesis focuses on studying littala’s international presence and offerings, as well as their target consumers’ behaviours in order to provide a new retail solution which will better serve the brand’s global expansion efforts. This thesis presents a main research question and two supporting research questions in regards to the primary hypothesis.

### The Primary Hypothesis

*What methods of storytelling are effective in brand communication and education for an international brand (such as littala) when expanding into the global market?*

Today’s retail environment is becoming increasingly fragmented and when looking specifically at the Asia-Pacific market, we find that it is vast and diverse, but also lucrative and rapidly growing. This means that brands must find ways of resonating with their consumers in more innovative ways than ever before. This fast-paced and saturated environment makes brand storytelling challenging, as messages and voices are often lost or misinterpreted along the way. This thesis will aim towards exploring solutions that are flexible, adaptive in nature, and express the brand stories and values in a way so that they are impactful, and reach consumers both globally and regionally. (Mckinsey, 2016)



### Secondary Hypotheses

*How can a brand better understand its international consumers?*

Iittala has a strong connection to its consumers in the home market, but is still trying to adapt to the needs and demands of its international consumers. To truly understand what is required to succeed in these foreign markets means taking the local cultures into consideration and developing strategies that correspond to these specific nuances. Paco Underhill, author and CEO of Envirosell, a research firm that advises retailers and designers, puts it this way, “Physical design and culture must work hand-in-hand... The physical design is easy, understanding the culture is the hard part.” (Sicola, 2016) The research and outcome in this thesis strive to address the methods and solutions towards this ongoing process of understanding.

*What qualities about Scandinavian design and products appeal to the international market, especially the Asia-Pacific?*

Iittala is a “Premium Scandinavian lifestyle brand from Finland” and positions itself as the "Home of Scandinavian Design." One of the most significant variables in the success of this research is to discover what aspects of Scandinavian design appeal to the foreign market. In the Asia-Pacific there is a definite and strong interest towards Scandinavian design products, and this thesis will try to pinpoint the specific influencers.



### 1.3 Methodology

The Research Phase in this thesis was executed in three parts. Firstly, a deeper understanding of the context surrounding the topic was required to inform the details of studies made in the latter part of the research. To this effect, literature reviews on "The Future of Retail" as well as specifically "Retail in Asia" were made to understand both the bigger picture, as well as providing a more specific understanding. In the second part, a general questionnaire was distributed digitally with the intention of discovering general attitudes towards Iittala and their product offerings. The third part consisted of various forms of field research, involving a deeper acquaintance of different Iittala retail locations and their local clientele. Following the Research Phase, the Design Phase was carried out through consolidating the materials collected and drawing conclusions; and then finally generating content for the end concept.

The literature review section of this thesis was drawn from various printed and digital sources. A large portion of the references were drawn from consultancy and trend reports, business journals, and research articles. These were supplemented by a selection of books; however due to the nature of publication timelines as well as the dynamic landscape of retail, this thesis looked more towards digital and print sources to obtain the latest information that would be relevant at the time of this research. The literature review section also presents trends in both the Future of Retail and Retail in Asia. It is important to note that the trends presented in this research were drawn from consolidating existing view points and references, not through this thesis' own trend-forecasting efforts.

1. Image from the interview in Shanghai. Interviews were conducted in a casual format, where the conversation was allowed to flow naturally.

## RESEARCH AND DESIGN METHOD

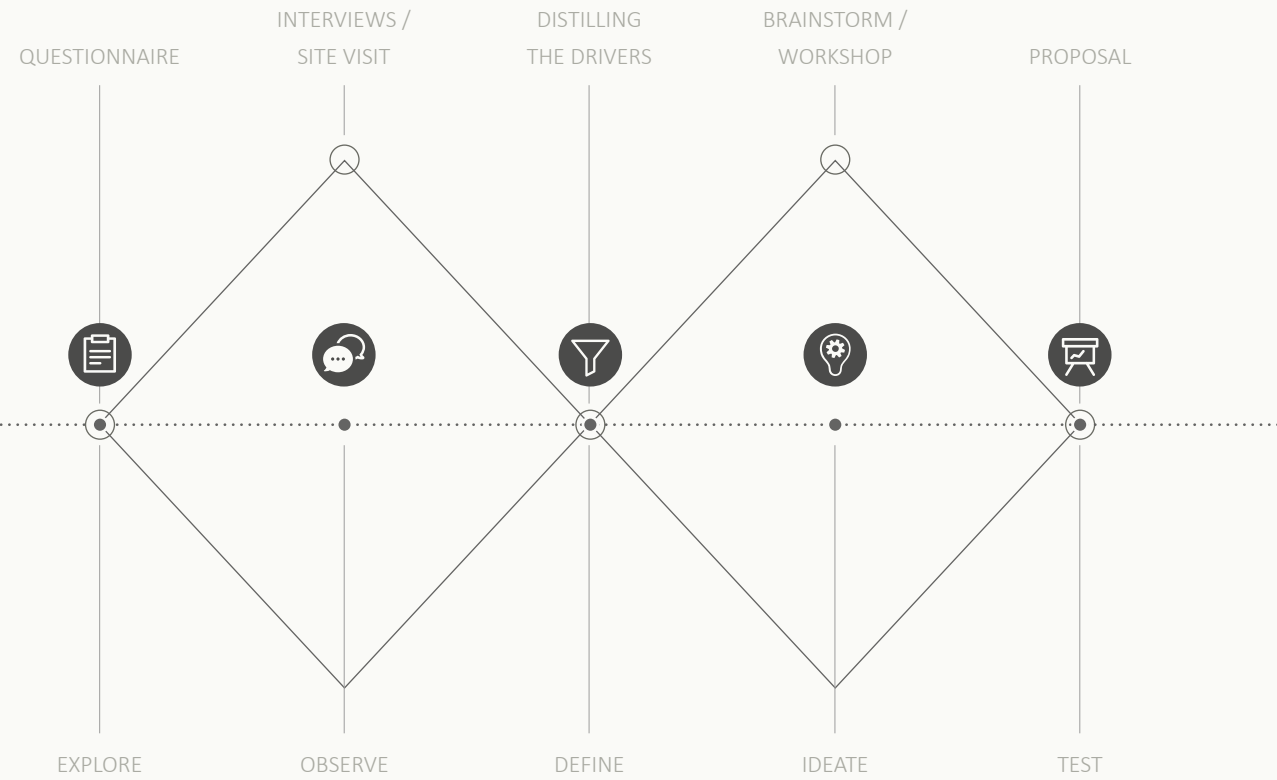


Fig. 1

Fig. 1 The research and design method, illustrated using the Double Diamond approach.

The questionnaire portion of this research served an explorative purpose. When the purpose was first discussed, the topic felt quite broad, and the variables plenty. The questions included were targeted at finding answers such as, “What are the purchasing behaviors of consumers when buying home products”, or “How is Scandinavian design perceived from a foreigner’s perspective”. The results of this questionnaire helped in formulating the premise of further research, and determine the specific questions that needed to be asked. This step also helped solidify some of the assumptions that were already made regarding attitudes towards Iittala, Scandinavian design, and purchasing behaviours.

The practice of ethnography informed many of the methods behind the field research part of this thesis, and can be defined as “The study of people in their natural settings; a descriptive account of social life and culture in a defined social system, based on qualitative methods.” (Martin and Hanington, 2012) A large component of this project involves understanding the nuances and discrepancies between different cultures and locations, while still addressing the same subjects and factors, which in this case would be Iittala and their retail offerings. In order to obtain a more comprehensive view of the Iittala’s retail ecosystem and the cultures that are within their reach, visits to four locations were planned; two in the Asia-Pacific, Taipei and Shanghai/Suzhou; and two in the Nordics, Copenhagen and Sweden. The locations were chosen due to the fact that they represent the dichotomy between two cultural groups, and by visiting two locations within each group, a larger sample could be taken and comparisons could be drawn. At each research location, an analysis of the actual store was performed, involving shadowing of the customers as well as the sales clerks.

Qualitative interviews were also conducted with store managers, local target consumers, and specific professionals relevant in the field. The interviews were carried out in a semi-structured format as to allow the interviewees to expand where necessary, and for the conversations to progress naturally based on the specific viewpoints of each subject. Interviews with the sales clerks provided a good snapshot of the situation at ground zero. As the front line of interaction with consumers, the sales clerks could provide nuanced observations, interesting anecdotes, and personal suggestions or complaints that would otherwise have gone unnoticed. On the other hand, the interviews conducted with target consumers provided a better understanding of the local cultural viewpoints and responses towards Scandinavian design and Iittala. Together, these interviews were intended to see the situation from both sides of the counter.

After the research portion, the materials and information collected were consolidated to form the basis of the concept. This involved determining the design drivers, mapping the ideas, and comparing the data collected across various locations. When the direction towards which the solution was steering became clear, a workshop was arranged to generate the content proposal for a portion of the concept. The workshop involved a similar sample of participants as the consumer interview, however was held in Finland with locals and expats. A workshop format was chosen for this part of the thesis because the approach should reflect the intent of the concept, which was to involve the public and appeal to the potential consumers.



## 2.1 What is Iittala?

2. Source:  
Fiskars data bank

With a history dating back to 1881, Iittala is an iconic brand that offers “aesthetically and functionally durable products that bring enjoyment and pleasure to everyday life.” (Aav, 2006) They specialize in design objects and home accessories, especially tableware and cookware, made with the intention of being long-lasting everyday objects while still possessing a premium feel and quality.

As one of the most recognizable Finnish brands, their products can be found in almost all Finnish households, many of which have been passed from one generation to another. With this in mind, the comprehensive Iittala collection is a blend of the old and the new; timeless classics that live comfortably next to their newest successors.

Iittala expresses values such as timelessness, engaging, Scandinavian, progressiveness, and distinctiveness. (Aalto-Setälä, 2015) The brand is best described by this description found on their website:

*What started as a glass factory in Iittala, Finland, today celebrates generations of essential objects that are made to enrich people’s everyday lives. We believe objects should be distinctive, combinable and multi-functional, with lasting design that inspires individual use and expression.*

*As a company based in Finland, where quality, aesthetics and functionality are important values, Iittala believes in interior design that lasts a lifetime. The progressive philosophy of our design heroes, Kaj Franck and Alvar Aalto, still inspires us to keep Iittala forever relevant.*

*We don’t just create beautiful objects. We believe in timeless design that will never be thrown away.*

(Iittala, 2017)

Fig. 2 The Iittala Universe: A diagram showing the different elements that form the Iittala experience presently.

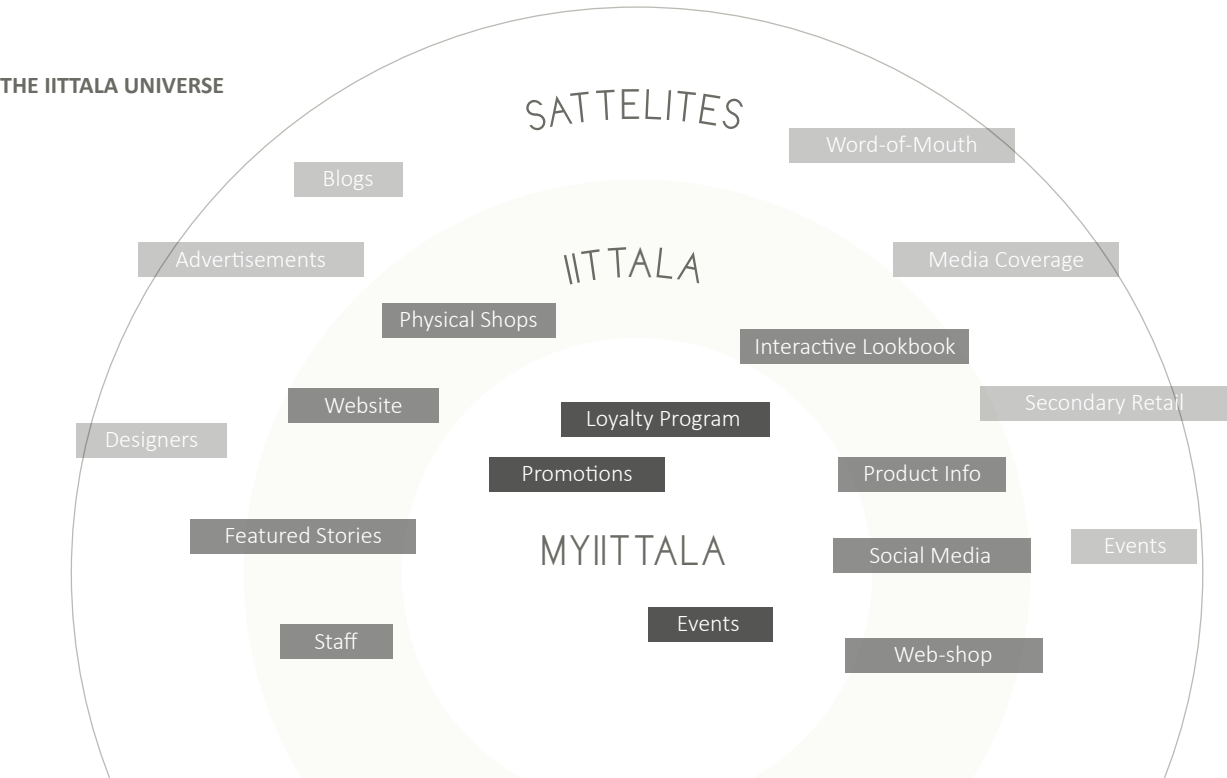


Fig. 2

2.2 Iittala: A History

“Iittala’s history is often described as a surprising success story” (Iittala: From Past to Present, 2016) and it is important to know the history behind Iittala in order to understand where the brand philosophies have originated. There is a reason why Iittala’s products stress the everyday-use aspect while still remaining a premium product. Much of it is rooted in the development of Iittala in association with Finnish history.

When the first Iittala glass objects were blown in a village of the same name back in November 24th, 1881, there were around 20 small glassworks businesses in Finland, and many were short-lived. At the time, Finland lacked skilled glassblowers, so Petrous Magnus Abrahamsson, the Swede who left Nuutajärvi glassworks to set up Iittala Glasbruks Akteibolag in Finland, brought over the first Iittala workforce from Sweden. Abrahamsson, notoriously quarrelsome, later lost control of the company in 1888, and during the time when Iittala was at a loss, the company started making pharmacy glassware. (Aav, 2006) (Finnishdesign.com, 2017)

Following Abrahamsson’s exit, Iittala went through many leadership transitions, but the glassblowers remained at the heart of the company. At the turn of the 20th century, Iittala glassworks was an international community, with almost 70% of the 233 glassblowers who worked between 1748-1860 coming from outside of Finland. However, these foreign glassblowers wanted to pass down their skills and keep the trade within their own families. The first apprentices who were accepted had to be the children of local people, and only if their fathers worked for the glassworks. This resulted in the emergence of Finnish glasswork clans, and during the 20th century, a strong team of Finnish born talent had been gathered. (Aav, 2006)



Iittala's legacy of working with designers began when Alfred Gustafsson, a former iron-mould foreman, became Iittala's first designer. The years under Russia's repression saw a stir in nationalist movements, including Gustafsson's "Great Men" glass series. This was a significant piece of work, however the label of designer was not important at the time. (Aav, 2006)

In 1917, the company was sold to the Ahlström group during the First World War, and became known as Karhula-Iittala. The World Wars laid the groundwork for the success of Finnish Industrial Arts in the 50's. During the 30's industrialists began to realize the importance of designers in differentiating their products, and as a result, Göran Honcell became the first designer to be officially hired by Finnish glassworks, and become a permanent Iittala designer in 1940. Under his direction, designers and glassblowers began collaborating, and he also introduced many collaborations with designers such as the Aaltos. (Aav, 2006) (Finnishdesign.com, 2017)

After the war there was a high demand for goods, which meant Iittala saw a significant growth in sales. Design of Iittala products also developed further through a competition in 1946 to "find new objects for Nordic crafts exhibition" in Stockholm. (Aav, 2006) The outcome of the competition resulted in the introduction of Tapio Wirkkala and Kaj Franck to Iittala's design collaborations, with Wirkkala taking first prize, and Franck receiving second and third prize. The 50's were a golden era for Iittala and Finnish design alike, with many awards received for Iittala's designer products, and a shift of attitude towards glass products. The material itself became more appreciated, and no longer needed to be faceted in the traditional style, marking the beginning of art glass. (Aav, 2006)

3. Kaj Franck  
Source: <https://www.woont.com/en/Designers/Kaj-Franck-4335>

4. Iittala Village  
Source: [http://www.iittalalasimaki.fi/en/history#gal\\_auto](http://www.iittalalasimaki.fi/en/history#gal_auto)

5. Tapio Wirkkala  
Source: <https://www.woont.com/en/Designers/Tapio-Wirkkala-4310>



3. Kaj Franck



4. Iittala Village



5. Tapio Wirkkala

*“Objects should always be designed with  
thought and [made] available for everyone”.*

- Iittala

In the second half of the 50’s a more practical administration stressed the importance of applying design to household glass, and Iittala became one of the first companies to make a transition from decorative dinner sets to functional ones. During this time, Sarpaneva, a designer who “merged art with utilitarian design” (Iittala, 2017), exhibited the “i-collection”, a collection of household glass, at Stockmann’s exhibition hall. The “i” symbol that was present on this collection was later adopted as Iittala’s signature logo, because it represented the “marriage of art and household glass”. (Aav, 2006) Finally, in 2007, Iittala was sold to Fiskars, where it remains now. (Finnishdesign.com, 2017)

Iittala’s many transitions, from a traditional glassblowing factory, to the aesthetically pleasing objects infused with progressive Scandinavian design, which it is now known for, have led to their philosophy that “objects should always be designed with thought and [made] available for everyone”. (Iittala, 2017)

Although Iittala’s art glass only accounts for perhaps a third of the brand’s output, (encompassing a much broader range of products from ceramics to wooden stools) the development of Iittala’s brand philosophy and identity is undeniably rooted in the rich traditions of Finnish craftsmanship. The hardships of repression and war allowed for the appreciation of minimalism and functionality to flourish, while industrialization brought to light the importance of designers in product development. Iittala has persevered through the years and has clearly been woven tightly into the very fabric of Finnish history. (Aav, 2006)

## 2.3 Key Stories

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To tackle the challenge of storytelling, one must first recognize the actual stories of the brand. Through meetings with Fiskars and reviewing Iittala brand materials and training, three stories have been determined as key to the brand, and the subjects of contemplation when examining what messages Iittala’s international consumers are responding to. These stories are “Heritage & Authenticity”, “Design Heroes & Collaborations”, and “Versatility and Timelessness”.

### Heritage & Authenticity

The story of the Iittala village and the families of craftsmen involved in the conception of the company/brand is an important part of Iittala’s story and reinforces the value of “Heritage and Authenticity”. The products that we see today have originated from over a century of traditions and craftsmanship, requiring a vast amount of human skills and highly capable and experienced professionals. The Savoy Vase by Alvar Aalto, for example, requires a team of seven craftsmen, twelve working stages, 100 degrees Celsius, and 30 hours. Every vase is unique due to its production method, and the sand that forms the raw material of the glass originates from Belgium, with each color requiring a specific recipe. There are thousands of unique color recipes for Iittala’s glass objects, and the colors and forms are designed to be inspiring, while still easy to mix and combine. (Iittala, 2017)

Design Heroes & Collaborations

The designers are a big part of iittala’s story and formulate the “Design Heroes & Collaborations” narrative of the brand’s set of values. Before the iconic “i” logo was invented, iittala products were defined by the designers who created them. The collaborations between craftsmen and designers were also quite a breakthrough for the glassworks industry, and differentiated iittala from its competitors. Beyond the classic design heroes that iittala has grown to be known for (such as Aalvar Aalto, Kaj Franck, and Tapio Wirkkala), the brand continues to collaborate with renowned international designers today, to the likes of Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec, and Issey Miyake. These designers function as the brand’s visionaries, driving ideals such as the Sarpaneva’s minimalism, and Alvar Aalto’s belief that “the end user decides the use of an object”. (iittala, 2017)

Timelessness & Versatility

One of the most distinguishing characteristics of iittala products is that they are all designed to live together harmoniously, regardless of whether it was designed in the 60’s or one of iittala’s newest products. When the designers were first introduced into the process, they started designing forms that were simplistic, and concentrated on the pureness of the glass and quality; this has translated into the products’ timelessness. The enduring design of these products formulate the story of “Timelessness and Versatility” amongst the brand’s values. All products within iittala’s range are easily combinable and are meant to be kept a lifetime or passed down from one generation to another.

6. Savoy Vase by Aalto  
Source: Fiskars data bank



2.4 Brand Visions

The iittala brand exists on a spectrum between functional everyday objects and art/design objects, while fulfilling Fiskars’ vision of “creating a positive, lasting impact on our quality of life.” (Fiskars, 2016) With this focus in mind, the company has opened the iittala and Arabia Design Centre in Helsinki, offering a more interactive experience to customers and visitors. Leni Valsta, Head of Fiskars’ Scandinavian Living business describes the purpose of the Design Centre as one that “tells the story of iittala and Arabia brands and presents the expertise of today and of the future.” (Fiskars, 2016)

Fiskars has also made efforts towards expanding in the Asia-Pacific, where the "Living" business opened 17 stores and shop-in-shops. The tough business environment has persisted, making growth in the region a challenge. As presented in the company’s 2016 Annual Report, the net sales generated by the Asia-Pacific market only accounts for 13% of the company’s total. (Fiskars, 2016) Fiskars and iittala should carry forward their focus on unique and interactive retail experiences into the Asia-Pacific, a market that requires significant innovation in order to achieve differentiation.



While the whole of the Asia-Pacific is a region of interest when considering this research’s topic, for the purpose of this thesis most of the studies and data collected focus on the retail market of China, as it shows the highest growth within Asia at the moment, and is therefore most worthwhile to study. This research also understands that a generalization cannot be made about the whole of Asia through studying China’s example.

3.1 The Land of Retail Opportunities

China, along with the rest of Asia’s retail market, has been rapidly growing and has proven to be one of the most lucrative in the world, especially for luxury brands. (Druga, 2016) At the time this text is cited, China’s retail market is only second in the world to the United States, but will grow to become number one within the following year. (Warc, 2016) According to PwC and the Economist Intelligent Unit’s 2015-16 Outlook for the Retail and Consumer Products Sector in Asia report, Asia’s retail market is projected to drive the world’s retail market in the next three years, with the regions sales rising by 8.5%, compared to the global rate of 5.6%. The sustenance of this growth is largely dependent on the increase of urbanisation in the interior and wage growth. (PwC, 2015) For this reason many international companies have set Asia, and especially China as an ideal location for expansion.



China’s market, though vast and diverse, is becoming more complicated for Western players. With the rise of a new class of companies known as the “local giants”, Western companies are finding it hard to keep up with the speed of domestic competition. Some of the most formidable examples include Alibaba, Taobao, Baidu, Henan, Tencent Holdings, Huawei, and Haier. These companies are so successful in fact “already more than 90 of the Fortune 500 are Chinese.” (Dodd and Zhou, 2015) To allow for such speed in their retail operations, the Chinese are surpassing other countries in embracing new technologies, and have become a global leader in pioneering the e-tail revolution. (Oracle, 2012) While retail sales in China has doubled in the past five years, online sales have increased tenfold, with the number of online shoppers continually growing, tripling from 130 million in 2010 to 380 million in 2015. This does not mean, however, that the brick-and-mortar stores are suffering as a result; online sales have added 23% to overall retail sales. (Nielsen, 2015)

Fig. 3 Percentage who say they have performed activity on their mobile device in the past six months.  
Source: The Nielsen Mobile Shopping, Banking and Payment Survey Q1, 2016

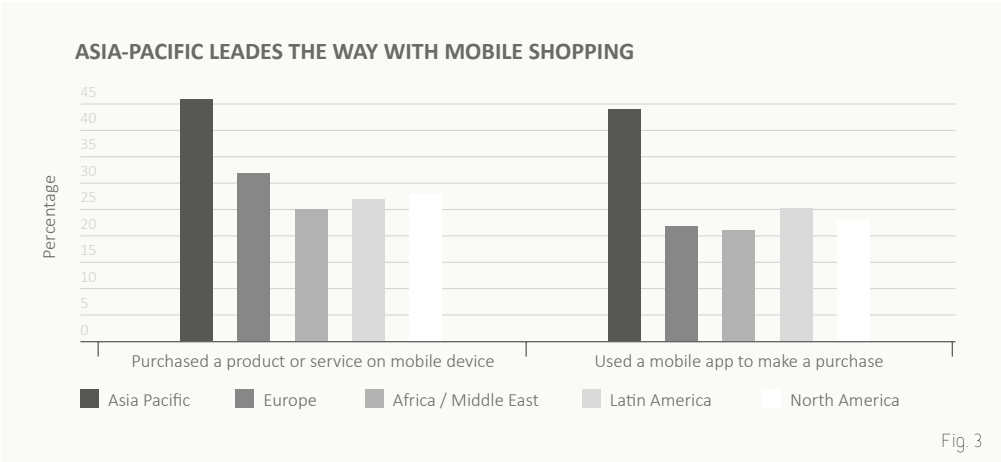


Fig. 3

In addition to this tremendous growth in retail, Nielsen has reported that Chinese shoppers are now more willing to try new brands and products, despite their tendency to be more discerning than their global counterparts. The number of shoppers who responded that they would be willing to try new brands and products has increased from 15% in 2013 to 26% in 2014. (Nielsen, 2014) This creates an excellent opportunity for foreign companies to expand their operations to China; at a time when the retail market is rapidly growing, as well as increasingly receptive.

### 3.2 Major Trends

Trends are reoccurring instances that develop as innovators attend to the essential needs and desires of the consumers in novel ways. Within the undulating landscape of Asia’s retail scene, Trendwatching’s 5 Asian Trends for 2016 and 5 Asian Trends for 2017 reports have each determined five key trends that will be prevalent in the future of Asia’s retail market. The two lists have been cross-referenced to observe the development of these trends, and other references have been used to support and validated these findings, which draw examples from various initiatives across different countries in Asia. The following are trends that have been extracted and are relevant to this study.

#### Making Real Connections

The trend of "Making Real Connections" speaks to the human desire for connection and interaction. This trend has been distilled from the trend of Practical Peers in Trendwatching’s 2016 report, and Borders Breached of the 2017 report, both of which address the importance of offline connections despite the ease of online connections. Brands are exploring the possibilities of broader communities through connectivity by maximizing resources and creating shared values. An example would be the company Airfrov in Singapore, whose service matches consumers who wish to purchase products from abroad, with travellers who offer their excess baggage space to transport these products.

In 2017, this idea of Practical Peers will expand to international scales and begin to “foster real-world connections across national and cultural borders.” (Trendwatching, 2017). This trend is exemplified through Harbin Beer’s July 2016 "Happiness Without Borders" campaign, during which the brand organized 30 days of games between China and five of their fourteen bordering countries, while serving beers to the participants. Not only does this spread international awareness of their brand, it also encourages friendly competition between the countries, and conveys genuine stories that celebrate the people and their locality.

Value Through Idle Capacity

Idle capacity describes resources that would usually become wasted or disregarded. The trend of Value Through Idle Capacity speaks to resource maximization in the sharing economy. Companies are building relationships between their brands and their consumers by becoming increasingly democratized, and blurring the boundaries between product and brand value. They are discovering that their CSR initiatives can use “smarter and more efficient ways to contribute to society or solve a problem by leveraging resources that are sitting idle inside their organizations.” (Trendwatching, 2016) For example, MINI Singapore developed a campaign named "We Tow You Drive", offering test-drives to stranded drivers by partnering with local breakdown recovery services.

Companies are also adding value through idle capacity by observing missed opportunities amongst the brand’s products and resources, and then offering increased functionalities as a way of conveying brand values and awareness. Vodafone did just that in the Indian city of Pune, when they fitted billboards with tanks that harvest rainwater to be distributed to drought-affected farmers. (Vodafone, 2016)

Heritage Preservation in the Digital Age

In an era of convenience, people don’t want the hassle and inconvenience that are involved with the efforts of preserving heritage and traditions. However, Asian consumers are still concerned with the effects of globalization, and the westernization that is sweeping across Asia. They fear that their traditional values and cultural heritages are being eroded, and that their sense of identity is becoming assimilated with the rest of the world. This craving for authenticity and to stand out culturally has manifested into a new category of initiatives that address this exact need. The company ePuja’s services are a perfect example. They are offering practices of Hindu traditions, booked via a mobile app, giving their users access to religious ceremonies and remedy rituals across 3600 Indian temples. (Trendwatching, 2016) Audi also tapped into this trend with they organized A Drive Back in Time, an event to commemorate 50 years of progress during Singapore’s golden jubilee. It allowed participants “to travel 50 years back in time using next-generation virtual reality technology that immerses you in a 360° experience of Singapore’s historic district in 1965.” (Audi, 2015)



Disrupt to Engage

Brands are looking for increasingly shocking methods to prompt consumers into action. Whether the purpose is to address social issues, or to simply spread brand awareness, shocking campaigns and stunts have proven to be effective in attracting attention amongst a mostly desensitized market. People are looking to be entertained, to be engaged and to be surprised. The Thai-Health Promotion Board utilized this fact when they printed Anti-tobacco posters printed with ink made from smokers’ lungs. The campaign was titled "The Message from the Lungs", and resulted in an increase of participation in smoking cessation programs by 500%. (Griner, 2015) These kinds of initiatives are also seeking further disruption by seeking to extend their coverage through social media. Brands are inserting themselves into social conversations and current events, employing real actions, in real time, in order to stay relevant. Consumers, in turn, are responding to those that back their online responsiveness with real offline initiatives. Such was the case when Phillipino bakery, Quims Cake, pledged on Facebook in November 2015 to give away P5 Million worth (over 100 000 USD) of free cakes “if Davao City Mayor Rodrigo ‘Rody’ Duterte wins the 2016 presidential election.” (Corpuz, 2016) After Duterte was elected, Quims Cake posted on their website that the promise would be fulfilled through the sampling of P5 million worth of cakes in scheduled batches, with registrations completed through Facebook comments on their page. The response was overwhelming, and the bakery received unprecedented coverage through the incident. (Corpuz, 2016)

7. 'The Message from the Lungs' campaign  
Source: <https://vimeo.com/126220314>

Information Empowers

The abundance of information available nowadays is empowering consumers to be involved and interact with the product brands and service providers from whom they purchase. In certain cases, this means that the informal economy, which has always thrived in Asia, is getting a “systematic and centralized makeover, allowing consumers a more organized roadmap in navigating the often messy market.” (Trendwatching, 2016) One example of this can be found in the Street Food Bangkok app. Showcasing around 150 shops and stalls serving local foods, the app helps tourists discover Bangkok’s street food, and even works with Google Maps to allow users to share locations and addresses with taxi drivers.

The power of information has allowed retailers to deliver products and services that satisfy shopping needs beyond an impulse to buy by catering to the “on the go” lifestyle of consumers. (Gale, 2015) It has also heightened consumer expectations around transparency, where end-to-end information about products, and real-time information about services have become important to a brand’s credibility. Boundaries are blurring between producers and consumers, while consumers “no longer want to passively receive information, but expect their consumption to produce information” that helps brands improve what they do. (Trendwatching, 2017) Naomaohu Lake Farm in China is capitalizing on this consumer need by offering melons that are purchased at the beginning of the growing season, and whose growth the consumer can monitor through live-stream cameras. “Ordering from an online shop in May, a customer simply inputs a melon number into a smartphone and will have direct access to the planting, fertilizing, watering, and harvesting of the melons in early September.” (Xinhua, 2016) These melons are sold at five times the traditional wholesale price, costing 68 yuan for a two to three kilo melon.

3.3 Key Challenges

Western companies trying to expand into the Asian market must understand the challenges that they will face in order to strategize their success. The Chinese, for example, possess a thirst for knowledge and product information, a strong regard for brand reputation, and the desire for integration and flexibility. Foreign retailers need to provide experiences that are superior to that of their local competitors who are already in-tune with these needs, and align them with smarter internal decisions. This means that consistency in marketing, transactions, and interactions must be ensured across touch-points, both online and offline. Brands need to stay on top of the quality of their day to day operations, because rest assured, the Chinese will make their voices heard if unsatisfied, as they are the “most vocal of poor services.” (Oracle, 2015)

Three key traits that form the main areas of challenge have been consolidated from the materials reviewed in this thesis. They are Assortment, Convenience/Speed, and Holistic Experience.

### Assortment

Companies can no longer simply charge Asian consumers a premium to buy products designed or developed for consumers in their home markets. As the Asian consumer becomes increasingly informed, and the retail market continues to mature, success now requires understanding of the regional and local needs/tastes, and to even develop products for Asia, within Asia. (Guild, 2009) Product assortments need to be reviewed according to these understandings, and constantly adjusted based on customer feedback and findings. In Harvard Business Review's The Future of Retail, Dieter and Nils Brandes state that "Retail is detail", and for brands to succeed, they must "ask the next layer of questions about how the assortment will affect [their] concept." (Brandes and Brandes, 2012) An endeavour like this should not be left up to computers. To understand the bigger picture, companies need to communicate with the people who work for them at these specific locations. In this case, human capital is the most efficient and effective, and offers the greatest flexibility.

8. Iittala at Taipei Miramar  
Source: <http://www.designboom.com/architecture/michael-young-studio-iittala-taipei-taiwan-flagship-03-16-2016/>



### Convenience/Speed

For any company entering the Asian market, speed becomes the most shocking and important factor. Countries like China, with their unprecedented embrace of e-commerce, are expecting their retail interactions to be fast, convenient, and at the tip of their fingers. The success of local retail giants are dependent on this, understanding that they need to respond quickly and develop products on a timeline that meets the rapidly shifting needs of their consumers. Georgia Zhuang, vice president of Nielsen China states that "in today's environment, we are seeing rapid change in the shopping behaviour of Chinese consumers. As such, a better and deeper understanding of consumers, including where they go and how they make shopping decisions, has become increasingly important for retailers and manufacturers to catch every opportunity from shoppers' evolving behaviour." (Nielsen, 2014) China has reached the mature end of the retail spectrum; therefore Western brands must embrace the goal of delivering a complete retail experience everywhere and anywhere. In recent cases, personalisation has even become a crucial factor for convenience, with over 86% of respondents in Oracle's The Evolution of Experience Retailing report rating it as fairly to very important. (Oracle, 2012)

### Holistic Experience

As Asian consumers continue to integrate multiple channels into their lives, it becomes critical that manufacturers and retailers deliver a holistic path to purchase. The merging of online and offline is redefining boundaries and expanding the reach of the consumer's shopping basket. This means that shopping cultures need to be studied in order to observe phenomenon such as group purchasing and intelligent offers through apps and social media. The idea of a holistic shopping experience also extends to the involvement of consumers in defining their own experience. "Retailers and consumers are willing to engage collaboratively to achieve a better retail experience" and consumers are prepared to share information about themselves and their preferences. (Oracle, 2012) Elements of the physical store and online presence must be employed seamlessly to ensure the success of retailers looking to expand to Asia.



Addressing these Challenges

When looking at Chinese consumers, a few generalizations can be made, such as their strong interest in the opinions of family/friends, consumer reviews, and website comparisons when visiting a retailer. Brand reputation is also rated as the most influential factor across the nation, with 94% stating that it was important. (Oracle, 2012) Generalizations are also observed among the Chinese consumers’ openness to e-commerce and retailer-initiated interactions via mobile devices; however beyond this, China and the whole of Asia needs to be analyzed based on urban clusters, and not by countries. The region is so vast and diverse, that markets come in various assortments and stages due to the fact that consumers originate from a multitude of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The specific needs and preferences of each region are also evolving constantly, with market speed and scale changing rapidly, and at times suddenly. To address this, “global companies will have to organize themselves regionally to coordinate strategy and use resources in the most efficient way while at the same time targeting the tastes of consumers on a very local level.” (Guild, 2009)

Fig. 4 Clusters are grouped by size, based on average 2015 urban GDP as % of national urban GDP (in 2005 renminbi)  
Source: McKinsey, 2011



Fig. 4

*“Global companies will have to organize themselves regionally to coordinate strategy and use resources in the most efficient way while at the same time targeting the tastes of consumers on a very local level.”*

-Guild

Mckinsey has organized a Cluster Map consisting of 729 of China’s 939 cities into 22 city clusters, consisting of as few as 2 cities, and as many as 84 neighbouring cities. They are organized based on government policy, economic linkages, and consumer preferences; three forces that shape China’s urban configuration. (Zipser et al., 2016) A brand like littala needs to study these clusters in depth and individually, in order to understand the local markets better.

To achieve success in these clusters, Todd Guild of Mckinsey has suggested a few areas that require change in order to reach Asia’s new consumers through a strategy that is both regional and local. Firstly, companies must restructure themselves so that their operations in Asia receive a high status, proportional with its long-term profit potential, and give the operation the autonomy that it needs. Fast and adaptive models need to be employed to leverage scale and innovation throughout Asia. Secondly, growth opportunities must be focused on urban clusters, and in regarding them separately. This includes development of category, format and brand strategies targeting these opportunities. Thirdly, products and prices must correspond to local preferences, and meet the tastes of each cluster-level. Finally, a variety of retail channels and formats must be explored for sales, marketing, and distribution purposes. This is a crucial, of not the most important point. (Guild, 2009)

4.0

THE FUTURE OF RETAIL

“Welcome to the store of the future. As technology enables ad blocking online and ad skipping on TV, marketers are increasingly searching for ways to better engage consumers in person. As consumers get more comfortable with e-commerce, marketers are finding they need to imbue their brick-and-mortar operations with updated missions” (Pasquarelli, 2016)

This section of the thesis explores where retail trends are heading, and what the landscape of retail may look like in the future. As e-commerce becomes increasingly popular, what does that mean for the brick-and-mortar store, and how can retailers leverage their physical spaces to complement their inevitable online presence? Here, the definition, tools/methods, and trends are explored.

4.1 Experiential Retail: What is it?

In our increasingly overloaded visual environment, consumers are becoming more limited in time and attention, making it a difficult feat for retailers to keep themselves focused and engaged. According to Elite Wealth Management, “there were 34 billion visits to US stores in 2010; by 2013, that number plummeted to an alarming 17.6 billion.” (Sicola, 2016) To this end, retailers are finding that they need to innovate in ways that make it easier and more convenient to satisfy their consumption desires and needs, all while on the go and connected to the endless reach of the web.

A consumer’s retail experience is created through the store atmosphere, website environment, social environment, service interface, product assortment, and price. (Berry et al., 2010) One of the biggest hurdles in the new age of retailing is the integration of online platforms with traditional brick-and-mortar commerce. It is a challenge to deliver a seamless and omni-channel retail experience, as retailers continue to discover methods of engaging consumers both online and offline. To do this, they must understand the strengths and strategic positions of each platform. Many retailers are realizing that they must transform their stores from transaction oriented to interaction focused, while co-creating experiences that are good for the individual customer. (Oracle, 2012)

Oracle defines a successful online experience as “a function of ease and convenience, with the ability to shop anytime, anywhere, and use sites that are easy to navigate.” It has revolutionized the dynamics of the retail function, sweeping away the power-limiting conditions of consumers –the lack of information and the lack of influence– and causing a shift in the balance of power among those who create the products, those who sell them, and those who buy them. (Berry et al., 2010) As more and more of the actual exchange of currency for goods take place online, the physical store can no longer simply function as a purchase point, but must become a showcase and engaging environment.

Sicola explains that the bottom line is while most “stuff” can be bought online, “people will still go to brick-and-mortar locations to have experiences.” (Sicola, 2016) The term Experiential Retail has become a popular way to describe the physical retail experiences and omni-channel initiatives that are allowing retailers to harness the power of their physical stores to amplify the reach of their online commerce.

Experts predict that shopping and lifestyle will continue to merge, prompting the intersection of work, shop, and play to occur simultaneously and in the same location. This also allows retailers to collect more data from the shoppers concerning their living and spending habits. Realizing this phenomenon, retailers are offering hands-on, authentic experiences that attract customers into their stores and driving higher brand visibility. (Pasquarelli, 2016)

## 4.2 The Essential Factors

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In an omni-channel retail world, there are certain factors that have become key when formulating a successful experience for the consumer. These include Service, which speak to the increased attention needed to create value propositions beyond the physical product, or sometimes becomes the actual product; Convenience, which is essential when the consumer is constantly connected and has access to an endless selection of products at their fingertips; and Personalization, which creates retail experiences that are “good-for-me”, and caters to the consumers as individuals with varying needs.

Service

Retailers wishing to differentiate themselves from their competitors can develop the Service aspect of their offerings to attain increased value propositions. Interactive service innovations offer opportunities for retailers by creating new markets or offer new benefits in existing markets. This became a tactic for retailers when, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, worsening economic conditions created a turbulent environment for retailers. Consumers became more value conscious as they reprioritized their consumption, and therefore changing their buying patterns. Retailers responded to this situation in a variety of ways: “giving up margin to offer more attractive value propositions; altering cost-structures by reconfiguring supply chains; changing service levels or service offerings by exploiting technology or redeploying people; and adjusting the assortment of store brands and marketing support for them.” (Berry et al., 2010) The development of services in retail has also lead to phenomenon like the sharing economy, and co-ownership. Retailers are realizing they must address the core needs of the consumers beyond the sale of the product, and sometimes even follows through to actual product-use, and taking responsibility for the lifecycle of their offerings.

Convenience

According to the Continuous Innovation: The Key to Retail Success Report, “convenience may just be the most creative and energetic example of retail innovation.” (Nielsen, 2014) Not only is it a mandatory consideration for retailers looking to expand into Asia, it is one of the most vital qualities that define innovative retail solutions worldwide. Mobile technology has revolutionized the way consumers view the activity of shopping and consumption; it is no longer an activity confined to certain times of the day or specific locations. Consumers want the ability to purchase what they want, when they want, and to have access to the information they feel necessary to inform their purchase. Brands like Tesco are pioneering this movement with their network of virtual stores in Korea called "Home Plus". Consumers are able to walk through displays of the same merchandise as offered in stores, scan QR codes of what they want to purchase, and have the goods delivered shortly after they return home. (The Telegraph, 2011) Initiatives like Home Plus are proving successful worldwide, and in a 2016 report by Nielsen, 74% of consumers confirmed this by answering that they “appreciate the freedom of being connected anywhere, anytime”, and 70% strongly or somewhat agree that their "mobile device has made their life better”. (Nielsen, 2016)

FLEXIBLE RETAILING IS ABOUT ADDING VALUE AND DIFFERENTIATION

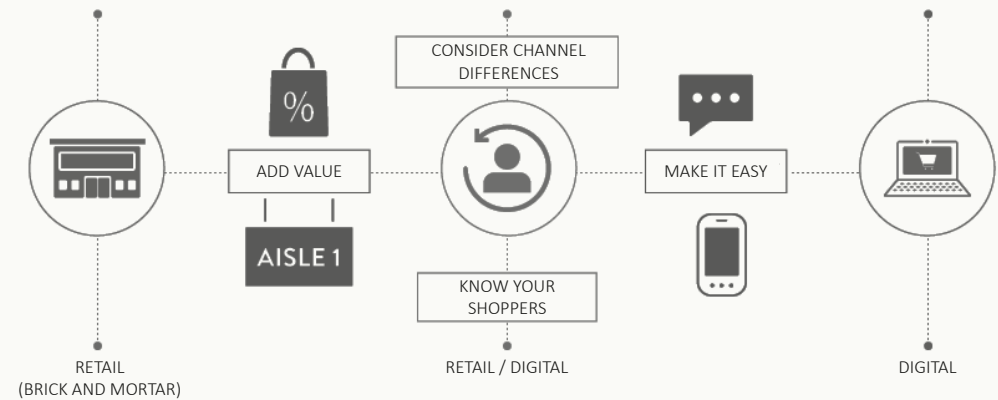


Fig. 5

Personalization

The idea of Personalization aims to deliver a “good-for-me” retail experience. (Oracle, 2012) In this age of constant connection and being bombarded by never-ending streams of information and advertisements, consumers like to feel that their voices are being heard, and that their desires are individualized and seemingly prioritized. With the rise of social media and overexposure, the fear of being lost in the ever-visible crowd is very real, and something that retailers need to consider when creating a successful experience. One example of this is receiving offers and discounts based on personal preferences, delivered on smart devices, and on location. Another is having access to a single shopping basket whether shopping online or offline. All of these add to the transparency of the shopping experience, providing the consumer with a sense of control and choice, all the while allowing retailers to observe and collect data on their customers. When shoppers feel that they are being characterized by their past behaviours, goals, memories and emotions, it moderates the influences that result in a unique and customer-specific experience. (Berry et al., 2010)

Fig. 5 'Using the best elements of a physical store and a strong digital presence to deliver seamless customer experiences'  
Source: Nielsen Asia Pacific Retail & Shopper Trends 2015





8. Exhibition at K11 Art Museum inside K11 Art Mall.

Source: <http://www.k11artfoundation.org/en/programme/inside-china-shanghai-station/>

### 4.3 The Trends

Certain formats for Experiential Retail have manifested into trends that represent some of the most popular and innovative ways of engaging customers. Most of these trends address the need for evolution of the brick-and-mortar store, and this section presents what some of these solutions may look like. They include Retail-tainment, The Cross-pollinated Store, The Unstore, and The Pop-Up Store.

#### Retail-tainment

Shopping is no longer a simple linear activity, and as this thesis stresses again and again, engaging the consumer is number one on the list. With the increase of destination shopping and shopping as leisure, the experience itself needs to be more entertaining than ever before. Michael Guenoun, Managing Director Travel Retail Asia for Cartier, states, “Global shoppers are placing more and more value on experiences rather than possessions. The desire of global shoppers for indulgence, exclusivity, sophistication, and status symbols will not vanish in the coming years. However, we believe that the offer in travel retail must change from a transaction to a real experience beyond the acquisition of products.” (Guenoun, 2016) In the future, brands will have to provide global shoppers with a brand range of experiences along with their products that result in a lifestyle. This may include features of local culture, art, food, design of the retail space, and other factors that influence the shopper’s experience. The idea is that if the customer is entertained, there will be a positive association to the brand.

#### The Cross-pollinated Store

Cross-pollinated stores represent a concept that broadens the reach of a brick-and-mortar location. This may be done through integrating new functions and services, or through collaboration with another brand to offer a more enriched experience that supports the two brands’ shared values. For example, Staples, the office supplies store, has launched locations in partnership with office-share start-up, Workbar, to house a portion of their square footage in these locations as work spaces, separate but adjacent to the product area. (Pasquarelli 2016) This enriches both Staples’ and Workbar’s offerings, allowing for a symbiotic partnership where the consumer can fulfill multiple needs at a single location.

Another method of cross-pollinating stores is when brands incorporate educational or showcase elements into their stores. Target, for example, opened an internet-of-things concept store called "Open House" in San Francisco, which functions as a learning lab for shoppers. (Higginbotham, 2015)



9. Target's "Open House" in San Francisco

Source: <https://corporate.target.com/article/2015/07/open-house-connected-home>



10. Warby Parker Eye-glasses Showroom  
Source: <http://www.insidebusinessnyc.com/warby-parker-nyc/>

**The Unstore**

The concept of the Unstore is one that has definitely been explored, but still under evolution towards acceptance. Brands experimenting with this method are continuing to test out methods that work most efficiently. The Unstore exists solely to display products as a Guide Shop, with the actual transactions taking place online. The advantage of this format is that stores do not need to worry about restocking inventory, or wasting precious square footage on stockrooms. Store associates are also more readily available to discuss products with customers, and can fully focus on the service portion of their duties. (Pasquarelli, 2016)

Eyewear marketer Warby Parker sets one of the most successful examples of the Unstore. Starting off as a strictly online service that sends samples of eyeglasses for customers to try on at home, Warby Parker has now opened brick-and-mortar locations stocked with only samples to advertise beyond the Internet. They discovered that their customers still possessed a desire to view a broader collection in person while receiving the in-store interactive experience. Samsung also sets a successful example with their "Samsung 837" store, a 40 000-square-foot flagship Manhattan store in the Meatpacking District, where no products are sold, and function only as a Guide Shop. This format allows marketing in the form of visitors’ word-of-mouth in social media, which can be more engaging and authentic than traditional ads. (Pasquarelli, 2016)

**The Pop-Up Store**

Pop-up shops are set up for a limited time by brands for various functions, ranging from seasonal product sales to special events promotions. The end-goals of these pop-ups also depend on the intentions of the brands that initiate them. Within the past decade, it has been a go-to marketing strategy for retailers looking to extend their brand or introduce new products; however pop-ups have also been created to promote campaigns, to host special events, or serve as a hybrid for businesses looking to ease their way into a new niche while minimizing potential losses. In any case, the pop-up industry has proven to be so popular that it has grown to 10 billion USD in sales according to PopUp Republic. (Retail Touchpoint, 2015)

Pop-up stores also come in various formats. They can be set up in traditional brick-and-mortar stores, as a shop-in shop, a standalone kiosk (both indoors and outdoors), and even via a motorized vehicle. The choice of format ultimately depends on the kind of exposure the brand is looking for, and how much control over the experience the brand requires. Customers who visit the pop-ups tend to look for a unique experience or more specialized shopping. Additionally, the nature of the pop-up creates buzz and a sense of urgency. Jeremy Baras, CEO of Pop-up Republic, states, “The great thing about pop-ups that we find all across the board –whether it’s a pop-up store, pop-up restaurant or event– is that they have this ‘fear of missing out’ quality to them. Customers are attracted to exclusivity. They’re attracted to a ‘here today, gone tomorrow’ type of concept.” (Retail Touchpoint, 2015) This, however, does not mean that the success of pop-up should be judged upon the sales they generate, but should be gauged by its reach in person and on social media.

This portion of the research focuses on littala’s target consumers, trying to understand how they view different facets of the brand including Scandinavian Design and the actual shopping experience. The research was geared towards international consumers, as the purpose of this research is to address the disconnect between littala and its foreign market. This section dissects and analyzes the initial survey, and the ethnographic interviews conducted in various foreign locations.

5.1 Research Participants

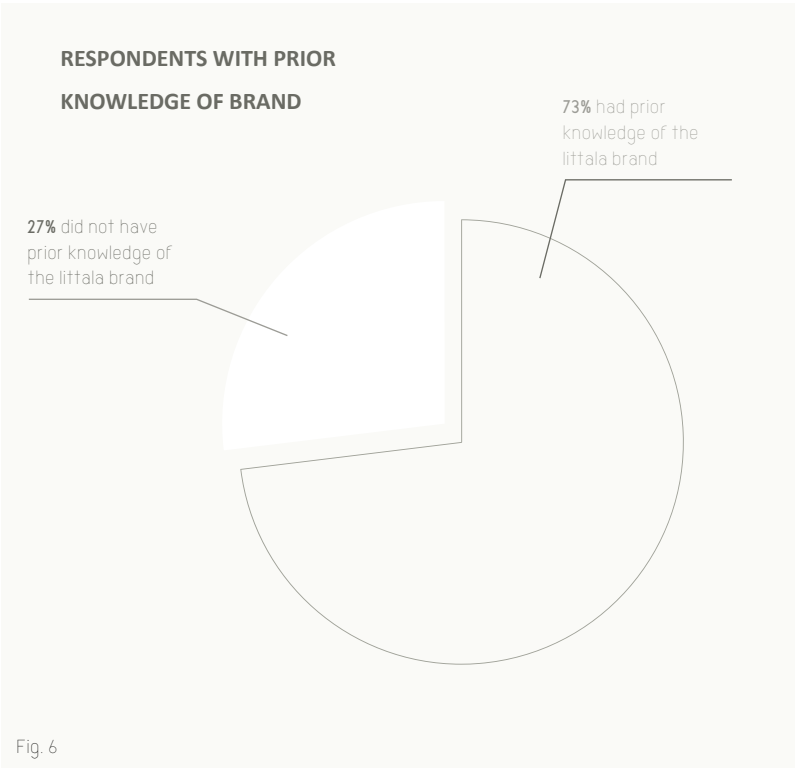
The Target Consumers research was conducted through a questionnaire and various interviews with subjects of different nationalities. The interviews were conducted adjacent to the site visits made to multiple international littala retail locations and offer a more in-depth glimpse into the target consumer’s perceptions and needs. The questionnaire conducted was an initial effort towards exploring the target consumer’s perspective at large, and to observe the existence of general patterns.

There were over 50 participants in the questionnaire, 81% of which were between the ages of 20 to 50, with around 29% working in the design industry, and the rest ranging from marketers to homemakers. The sample of respondents represented a wide spectrum of nationalities, with many respondents having resided in multiple cities. In total 24 countries were represented, and even more cities were mentioned.

To validate the relevance of this survey, 77% of respondents replied 4 or 5 when asked to rate their interest in home décor from 1 to 5; and 38.5% replied that they browse home accessories 1-2 times a month, and 25% replied 1-2 time a year.

There was also a high rate of knowledge of the littala brand, with 73% of respondents replying that they had already known or hear of the brand prior to the survey. Of the remaining 27%, only two respondents had visited Europe, and only one respondent is working in the design industry, proving that most of the respondents with a global or design interest have knowledge of the brand.

Fig. 6 Chart expressing respondents possessing knowledge of the littala brand prior to this research's survey.



5.2 A Different Perception

It is important for this thesis to have an understanding of the interest levels towards littala as a Scandinavian brand. Results from the survey show that 21.2% of respondents had no idea what Scandinavian design is, not to mention what littala represents as a Scandinavian brand. Of those who responded with having knowledge of Scandinavian Design, many used key words such as simple, natural materials, clean, timeless, functional, and calm. Others could pinpoint specific Scandinavian brands such as Marimekko or HAY, but could not describe the shared values or aesthetics.

Interviews with local target consumers of littala locations in Shanghai, Suzhou, Taipei, Stockholm and Copenhagen were also conducted, which gave a more concise view of the discrepancies between the different locations. Amongst the Asian cities, knowledge of the brand was quite low despite a rise in interest towards Scandinavian Design. However, through further questioning, it was apparent that the trend of Scandinavian Design was viewed exactly as such, a trend. Many interviewees expressed that it is a general aesthetic that appears to be popular now amongst a younger crowd, but perhaps is not associated with the actual definition of Scandinavian design. On the other hand, people who understand the idea of Scandinavian Design may not be able to recognize it visually, proving that there is a disconnect between the definition and the actual product.

11. A common perception of Scandinavian design is bright, simple colors, and natural materials. Source :<http://elisabeth-heier.no>



Despite the growing popularity of Scandinavian design as an aesthetic or a term, three fundamental reasons stood out as having the most impact over Iittala's challenges in the Asian market. Firstly, the simple aesthetic of Scandinavian Design is vastly different to that of Asia's ornamental visual culture, meaning that although it is an acceptable style for public use (such as restaurants or libraries), it is hard for the masses to adopt it into their own home. Some of the interview subjects expressed that they feel there is no allure for consumers to purchase Iittala objects for their own homes because normally these types of objects would become showpieces to be displayed, and Iittala products are sometimes too simple for that purpose.

Secondly, the story of Iittala's Design Heroes, while interesting in its concept, does not provide for an effective selling point when the designers themselves are not recognizable to the consumer. In this case, the idea of reputation is extremely crucial, and the fact that consumers need to trust in the prominence of a designer unknown to them means that the resonance will not be quite so significant. However, the new collaboration with Issey Miyake has been successful at bringing the Iittala brand into the limelight, as the international fashion industry is a more developed market, and therefore enjoys a higher awareness.

The third factor that affects Iittala's success in the Asia market is due to the differences in lifestyle. One interview subject felt that sometimes Iittala objects don't feel like they fit into the Taiwanese lifestyle because they were designed for their intended location. Customers may appreciate this style of design, but may be reluctant to choose these objects for their homes. There is a lack of understanding for the Scandinavian way of life; to enjoy the small of moments of everyday life through quality products and rituals.

Perceptions of the Iittala brand from the Swedish or Danish perspective show a great disparity from that of the Asian subjects. The attitude is generally positive, with a deeper understanding and appreciation for the brand and its values. One subject expressed that they felt the products represented the society of Finnish culture, and appreciated the idea of using quality products for everyday life, stating "Swedish design is more for special occasions because they lived in peace for a long time, so design has been developing for a longer period. For Iittala, a Finnish company, the functional values are much higher. The fancy dinnerware and the everyday dinnerware is the same set."

### 5.3 Shopping Behaviour / Experience

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Shopping is viewed as a major leisure activity in China and Taiwan, and people are constantly seeking the newest and hottest trends. The home products market is definitely experiencing a higher interest level, however the shopping behaviours of the Asian consumer may pose a challenge for foreign brands to grasp. The reputation of a brand is king when speaking of market dominance, and with the aid of e-commerce technologies, the requirement for speed and convenience has become imperative to capture the hearts of Asian shoppers. Beyond a multi-channel approach to retail, foreign brands also need to keep in mind that the Asian consumer has a different set of priorities when considering their purchases. There tends to be a focus on function and practicality, both in the purchasing experience and the product itself.

The reputation and image of a brand is considered possibly the most important purchase influencer in China and Taiwan. Interview subjects in both locations have expressed the significance of reputation and word-of-mouth when formulating their purchase decisions. One subject stated, "Amongst my friends, most will buy something if they have heard of the brand or have been recommended by their friends. Regardless of whether they care more about quality or price, brand reputation is the most important." One effective way of increasing brand reputation is to increase visibility of the brand and place it in the right locations. According to one interview subject in Shanghai, some of the largest luxury retailers may not experience the best turnover at their most prestigious Shanghai locations, but these stores are necessary for visibility, and the location boosts the brand image. In short, the consumers like to purchase products that they know will receive peer approval, or better yet, peer envy.

*Quality of life as a concept must be taught to these Asian consumers, as they don’t see the purchase of everyday products as an investment into the quality of everyday life. As a result, function and price is valued above the meaning and history of a product’s brand.*

Retailing and advertising channels also dictate the success of a brand and its products. In China, platforms like WeChat and Taobao are revolutionizing the way consumers view retail experiences. WeChat, for example, can send location based promotional offers via push notifications, and can be connected to your credit card to facilitate easier transactions both online and in-store. Taobao offers a vast e-commerce platform where anything from clothing to food products are sold, and prices are easily compared. The logistics in China are also quite impressive, with most products delivered the same day of order, in major cities. There is also a popular concept called “dai gou”, or “purchase on the behalf-of”, if directly translated. This is especially popular in Taiwan, where a individual seller will post the specs of a specific product on social media groups, and then group members would pledge purchases to the seller. The individual seller would then place an order on behalf of the group, shipped or brought over directly from the source of supply. (e.g a shipment of Le Creuset pans straight from France)

The hardest variable for foreign brands to grasp is probably the fact that Asian consumers possess a different set of priorities when making purchasing decisions. As the Chinese consumers become wealthier, there is definitely a willingness to invest in home products. On the other hand, due to this rapid increase of wealth, many consumers have not adjusted their aesthetic preferences, and will tend to lean towards products that are louder and more ornamental. This makes justifying the cost of simpler products a challenge, especially when many Chinese manufacturers are knocking off Scandinavian design products and selling them at a lower price. In addition to the aesthetic preferences, functional considerations are also one of the top priorities for both Chinese and Taiwanese shoppers. They will not overlook function for design, unless the brand has high visibility, is trendy, and has a good reputation. Quality of life as a concept must be taught to these Asian consumers, as they don’t see the purchase of everyday products as an investment into the quality of everyday life. As a result, function and price is valued above the meaning and history of a product’s brand. The owner of Design Butik, a shop in Taipei carrying specifically Scandinavian Design home products, says, “Taiwanese consumers don’t have the patience to truly understand the stories and meaning behind the objects. Taiwanese people are in general more quick-tempered.”



Contrasting to the Asian interview subjects, their European counterparts in Stockholm and Sweden place a much higher significance on brand values and product meaning. Many of the interviewees state that they return to shop at Iittala time after time because their values align with what Iittala stands for. They are so loyal to a point, that the shop staffs in Sweden have experienced customers who come into the store to express their dissatisfaction with Iittala moving certain components of their manufacturing away from Scandinavia. Danish and Swedish customers also differ from Asian consumers in that they are more likely to purchase dinnerware in sets, and therefore in larger amounts. In Asia, the dining practices don’t require for full sets of dishes and bowls, and therefore consumers will often just purchase one of each of their favourites.

One commonality found through the survey was that “aesthetic” and “quality of raw materials and craftsmanship” are highly important for consumers across the board when purchasing tableware. Around 85% of the respondents rated “quality of raw material and craftsmanship” as 4 or 5, on a scale of 1 to 5; and 90% of respondents rated “aesthetic” as a 4 or 5. Another common fact shared between the Asian and European subjects in this study is that they view brand loyalty as a high contributing factor to their purchasing decisions.



12. A common way of setting the table in Scandinavia. Source: <https://theworldaccordingtoaj.wordpress.com>

13. A common setting in China/Taiwan when entertaining or eating at home. Draws a big contrast with the Scandinavian table setting. Source: <http://www.appledaily.com.tw/realtimenews/article/new/20150626/635826/>

This section addresses observations and feedback regarding the physical retail environment. The research in this study involved site visits to five of littala’s locations which include littala in Uliving, Suzhou; littala in Miramar and Eslite, Taipei; littala in NK, Stockholm; and littala in Illums Bolighus, Copenhagen. The research towards the retail space helps formulate a better understanding of the customer’s experiences as well as the operational and sales challenges as voiced by the littala retail staff.

6.1 The Retail VI and Physical Environment

The physical retail experience is important in forming the consumer’s perception of the brand. In the initial questionnaire conducted, respondents were asked if they had visited an littala retail location and to describe their impression of the store. Of all the respondents, 63% replied that they had indeed visited at least one littala location, and approximately half of these respondents gave a positive feedback of the retail interior. The other half had neutral or negative experiences. In the positive feedbacks, terms such as clean, bright, fresh, pure, modern, and high-quality were used. They expressed an overall classy environment, with nice splashes of color from the products themselves. One respondent with a neutral feedback wrote, “I’ve been to a few littala shops. Can’t remember where they were, but in my eyes they looked like any other home décor shop. Neutral impression.”





The negative feedbacks were along the same lines as respondent mentioned a lack of individualism and the atmosphere “not standing out”. One respondent wrote, “[the shop] doesn’t make me want to stop and take a look because the layout and interior just doesn’t look interesting. [I only go] when I have something [particular] in mind and I need it.”



littala locations:  
14. Taipei Miramar  
15. Taipei Eslite  
16. Suzhou ULiving  
17. Stockholm NK  
18. Copenhagen Illums Bolighus

At both the Taipei Miramar location and the Copenhagen Illums Bolighus location, store staff indicated that the new shop interior is sometimes too intimidating and perhaps does not reflect the “everyday living” aspect of the brand. It also tends to discourage people from wanting to touch and experience the products. The staff in Stockholm has also mentioned that the new surface materials chosen for the interior are not maintenance friendly, and easily show wear-and-tear. The aluminum shelves show scratches when products are moved, and the glass table surfaces show smudges when touched. It takes a lot of time to keep the store looking clean and polished, and as a result of the delicate surfaces, customers are reluctant to interact with the products.



## 6.2 From the Staff’s Perspective

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The interaction between Iittala's retail staff and their customers vary from location to location. However, at each location visited, there were some comparative feedback regarding customer interests and behaviours; challenges and suggestions towards higher sales; and viewpoints regarding brand education and sales tools. As can be expected, the Asia locations featured in this research share a greater consensus, while the European locations also share larger similarities.

### Customer Interests and Behaviours

The Iittala location in Suzhou performs quite well, and attracts clients with a broader knowledge of the brand and others in a similar genre. Due to the nature of the Uliving format, which features multiple floors of home products, many interior designers and homeowners visit the shop with the purpose of purchasing products to fulfill an entire project’s needs. As a result, the Iittala brand is relatively well known in Suzhou compared to other Asian cities visited. In Taipei, both the Eslite and Miramar locations expressed that there is not a great prior knowledge amongst customer who visit their stores, however the Eslite location experiences a higher interest level in brand story and Scandinavian lifestyle than the Miramar location. Their clientele are in general more culturally and design knowledgeable, so they can appreciate the fact that Iittala products are designed by Finnish and International masters. The Miramar location, although larger in size and features a newer retail concept, is situated in a neighbourhood that is more of a mature community as opposed to a young cultural hub. The staff of Iittala at Miramar expressed that their customers don’t ask many questions. "They are looking at the products strictly on visual and quality values. One point that does sell is that they are hand-blown glass".

The Stockholm NK and Copenhagen Illums Bolighus locations both expressed a presence of loyal customers who return often for new product launches or specific needs. Customers are also much more in-tune with Iittala’s brand values, understanding the uniqueness of each piece and examining products for the “perfect one”. In the interview, one staff member from the Stockholm NK location recounted an instance when a customer visited their store with a water glass they already owned, and attempt to find matching glasses with the exact same circumference and thickness. Sometimes the customers also really dwell on small nuances in color and transparency. The staff at Illums Bolighus in Copenhagen also reflected on the importance of having the sample dining tables and being able to present different arrangements and combinations. The Iittala brand representative at Illums Bolighus expressed that there is almost always a rise in sales of products that they display in the sample settings, and some customers even opt to buy the entire set on display.



19. Video Screens at Iittala stores have been receiving good feedback. Source: <http://www.global-instore.com/news/2016/7/19/iittala-shop-nk-stockholm>

Challenges / Suggestions

The challenges experienced in the Asia locations largely revolve around the lack of brand knowledge and the inability to sell the Scandinavian lifestyle to their customers. It is also a challenge at times to convince customers that Iittala products were designed for everyday use, as the general view is that they are quite expensive, and therefore should be bought for display purposes. Other challenges expressed regard the specificity of each location and what different types of advertisement could help in addressing these issues. For example, staff at the Miramar location express that their clientele have a lower interest in brand stories or design backgrounds, as the neighbourhood consists of an older consumer demographic (generally over 50), and do not follow design trends. Their local clientele care more about their personal tastes, and therefore causes difficulty for the brand stories to create a resonance. Another challenge at the Miramar location is that there is no capability of displaying a full table setting, other than through the digital devices.

The European locations experience similar challenges when their customers are Asian tourists. Beyond the different interest levels, there is also the challenge of the language barrier, and a lack of ability in communicating product information. With local consumers, the store staff also expressed that the store's printed visuals and information are not effective in communicating their values because they don't draw attention. Specifically at the Stockholm NK location, there are limitations to the visuals allowed, and even the Iittala logo is not permitted to be displayed due to department store policies. The NK store is also not allowed to offer access to the MyIittala program as it conflicts with their own NK loyalty program.

At Illums Bolighus, there have been positive responses and much attention paid to the video footage of glassblowing, and the feedback is that there could potentially be more footages produced to offer variety. The staff also conveyed that they would like better channels to relay such feedback to upper management, as they feel now the process of store feedback can take a very long time, with no confirmation of whether their voices have been heard.

Brand Education and Sales Tools

Providing the sales staff with the right tools is crucial to a store's success. The Iittala staff that this research has interviewed expressed certain areas in which they feel improvements could be made. One of the biggest areas of feedback received was concerning staff training and brand education. While some stores, such as the NK Stockholm location, stated that they have a lot of education to support their sales, they also mentioned that they know the education is store-specific. There are web-courses available that are updated once a year, however these courses are only accessible through the company computers, and since store hours are so busy, there is little time to actually complete these courses in detail. The NK Iittala staff also expressed that they have collected many materials on their own to educate the employees on the older product collections. The Illums Bolighus staff in Copenhagen expressed similar concerns. Although the brand representative at Illums Bolighus has had education in Iittala's background from her previous studies, most employees who work as sales receive little to no training other than through the semi-annual meetings with the regional Fiskars representative.

The problem is even greater in Taipei and Suzhou's location. In these stores there is general product knowledge, however understanding of the Scandinavian lifestyle and values is extremely low, and the "design heroes" aspect of the brand story is not being conveyed effectively as the staff have trouble remembering the designers themselves. One way that problems like these could be addressed is through more thoughtfully implemented sales tools. At both the Eslite and Miramar locations, the staff conveyed a need of more informational and promotional materials in the native language of Mandarin. When asked to provide product info at Eslite in Mandarin, the manager replied that they did not possess any, and are therefore having problems conveying the information to their customers. They sometimes even resort to searching the web to acquire the information they need. One consensual feedback amongst the Asian and European stores was that they felt the need for a comprehensive catalogue that details all the different products and their specifications. This would be vastly helpful when customers come in with a very specific need, and get an overview of Iittala's offerings.

*Products that are hard to sell are the simple designs with neutral colors such as the Teema series, which customers may feel they have something similar at home, and would prefer something more vibrant and bold.*

-Staff at Taipei Miramar

### 6.3 Product and Selection Feedback

Product development and assortment is extremely crucial for foreign brands looking to thrive beyond their domestic market. To get it right, retailers need to understand the needs, lifestyles, and cultures of their local consumers. This section goes over some of the feedback collected during interviews concerning Iittala products and the response they receive from store customers. The feedbacks have been categorized into three groups that speak to different aspects of Iittala’s range of products, and can provide insight when making future decisions regarding assortment and product development. The categories are Product Popularity, Product Functions, and Product Features.

#### Product Popularity

To determine the best assortments for a retail location is to first understand what is already selling, and what is not. Of the five retail locations visited, each one experienced different popularity levels amongst their products. In Suzhou Uliving, The Taika series and the Savoy Vase sell the most, and surprisingly water glasses also sell quite well, being mostly recommended by interior designers shopping for their clients. The wine glasses are amongst the least popular due to their simplicity, and the cookware is also unpopular. In the Taipei Eslite location, Taika and the Glass birds are popular, as the location draws a more art and design conscious crowd. The Issey Miyake collection also sold well, and drew a lot of positive feedback. The wine glasses at Eslite are also an unpopular product, as customers always feel a need to compare to other brands who may have more elaborate and traditional styles. In Miramar, the Taika series is also the most popular, especially the large mugs which are often bought in pairs. Products that are hard to sell are the simple designs with neutral colors such as the Teema series, which customers may feel they have something similar at home, and would prefer something more vibrant and bold.

In the Europe locations, many of the least popular items in Asia are actually selling the most. In Stockholm NK, the Teema series is amongst the best sellers, as are the Essence wine glasses and the Savoy Vase, which seems to retail well at all locations. The Taika series sold well for a while following the launch, however they are now mostly purchased by tourists, as many locals find them too ornamental and confusing to the brand. Another category that does not enjoy higher sales is the home décor products such as the Aarre collection, Aitio box shelf, and Plektra stool. These products are often overlooked because they are not featured as heavily, and become lost in the sea of tableware. The Iittala location at Illums Bolighus, Copenhagen experiences similar product preferences, and mentions that their water glasses also sell well, and almost always in multiples.



19. Water tumblers are not a popular item in Taiwan as they only have a single-function. Source: littala Instagram

**Product Functions**

The feedbacks concerning product function issues have been mostly received from the locations in Taipei and Suzhou. They stem from a fundamental difference in lifestyle and culture, as well as varying living habits. In Suzhou Uliving, when asked what sorts of questions customers usually have when browsing the littala section, the staff expressed that “people enquire the most about the use of the product. Sometimes they feel the bowl sizes are confusing for their functions. [They are] too big or too tall for a rice bowl, or then just different from Chinese tableware.” In Taipei, water glasses do not sell well, and in fact at the time when the interview was conducted, the Taipei Miramar shop did not even carry any water glasses. The staff explained this by saying, “Water glasses are not sold at this location because Taiwanese people don’t like water glasses. Here people value versatility in function, and water glasses are only for cold beverages, and are therefore not as functional as mugs.” Other products that are not selling due to their functions rendering them obsolete in the Asian home are candleholders and large salad trays. These are just not objects in the average Asian home that would experience any use. One unfamiliar product that does sell in the Asia market, but not for its intended purpose is the eggcups. One interviewee who has worked for Marimekko in Taipei revealed that at their shop, they sell eggcups as sauce holders, tea-cups, or alcohol cups. The shape and size of the eggcup is quite similar to the Chinese tea or alcohol cup, and therefore provides a fresh take on a functional object. This method of finding alternative functions for unfamiliar products to make them seem more relevant could be a very worthwhile sales tactic to explore in the future.

*“The customers are most attracted by the quality and design of the products. These are things that speak for themselves.”*

-Suzhou Uliving Staff

**Product Features**

Certain features of littala products have stood out as being unique or attractive to customers. One feature that has been mentioned at all locations is the feel of the glasses and how that reflects the quality of littala products. This is especially important for some of the simpler designs, as it is a strong differentiating factor from other cheaper options. In Suzhou Uliving, the staff indicated that the customers are most attracted by the quality and design of the products. These are things that speak for themselves.

In the Europe locations, where knowledge of the brand is much broader and has existed for a much longer time, the nuances of the products are a fascinating point of interest, and one that the Asia market could learn from and promote. Staffs at the Stockholm NK store recount anecdotes of customers coming in to find Kivi candleholders with a specific thickness at the bottom (which can sometimes range over one centimeter), water glasses with a specific opening circumference or profile, and even finding the perfect shade of a certain color when realizing that they all differ slightly due to the nature of their handmade qualities. Certain customers have even noted that some of the classic product lines, such as the Savoy vases, are different than ones that their grandparents have passed down to them, in that they are sharper and more precise. This is of course due to more modern and developed methods of manufacturing.

From the research conducted, the design phase commenced with first defining the design drivers, and then determining the methods that would most effectively address these issues. This chapter describes the reasoning and development behind the resulting design components, and offer a window into the thinking process.

7.1 The Design Drivers

Extracting the key takeaways from the background research, questionnaire, interviews, and site observations, then analyzing the clusters that started to form among these points, determined the design drivers for the proposed concept. From the myriad of issues observed, three drivers became the most apparent and prominent. First, is the physical interaction with the products, and how this aspect can enrich the consumer’s shopping experience, and form a stronger connection with the brand; second is to understand the littala consumer better, achieved through methods that will allow more thorough observations of the consumer motivations and product use; the third driver is better brand education for the littala customers and more effectively conveying the brand values. These drivers are further explored in this section.

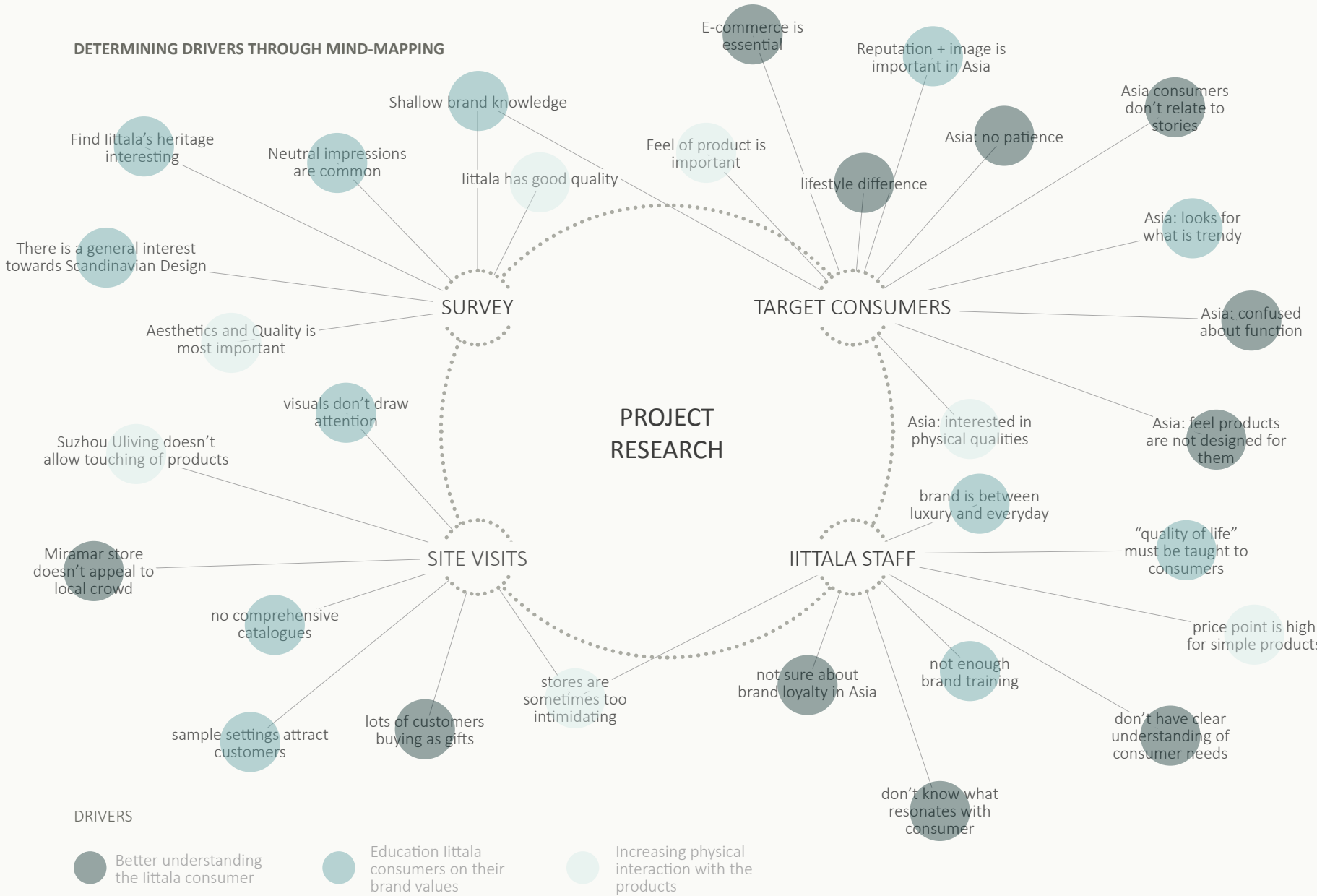


Fig. 7

**Increasing Physical Interaction with the Products**

Stores are often thought of as places where the products for sale are displayed on shelves and in display cases so the consumer can view their choices and make their purchases. However, as the electronics industry has demonstrated, it is important to move the inventory from the display cases in the customers' hands. Williams and Ackerman comment in their article titled Please Touch the Merchandise, "We tend to think about consumers using touch primarily because they have to — to examine packages and to fill shopping carts. However, touch can also create symbolic connections between people and products, and between buyers and sellers." (Williams and Ackerman, 2012)

Another aim through increasing interaction with the products is derived from some of the feedback received through the interviews. Many expressed that the major differentiation between some of Iittala's simpler designs and their cheaper alternatives is in fact the quality and "feel" of the product. Furthermore, the realization of the uniqueness of each piece of glassware, as demonstrated by consumers who spend precious time in picking the perfect piece out of a selection of the same product, is exactly the note that needs to be underlined when selling to the Asian customers. The end concept of this thesis will focus heavily on product uniqueness and engaging the consumers in interacting with the Iittala products, making the act of shopping into an experiential one.



*To truly form a strong international retail strategy, the brand needs to have access to information such as local tastes, products that travel beyond their purchase points, and product appeal to different consumer groups.*

#### **Better Understanding the Iittala Consumer**

Although the research conducted in this thesis provided a substantial amount of information that offers a look into the mindset of the Iittala consumer, it became very apparent there should be an even greater effort made towards deeply understanding the consumer needs and motivations. From the interviews and store visits, it is apparent that Iittala and its staff have yet to understand their customers on a local level, nor has a strong connection been formed. To truly form a strong international retail strategy, the brand needs to have access to information such as local tastes, products that travel beyond their purchase points, and product appeal to different consumer groups. The proposed concept in this thesis will offer an initiative that will generate data on how the Iittala products are being used or redistributed, and provide a link between Iittala and their customers.



20.

#### **Educating Iittala Consumers on their Brand Values**

Conveying the brand values are extremely important, and for most of Iittala's international customers, they have little to no idea what Iittala stands for as a brand, other than keywords such as design and Scandinavian. This is also a contributing reason why customers in Sweden and Copenhagen are having a negative response to the fact that product manufacturing is now being outsourced in parts. They feel the brand is losing all its value, when in reality the outsourcing is supporting the other values that the brand holds, such as everyday accessibility and product innovation. One of the major components to Iittala's stories is the idea of product versatility and the combinability of the products. This is a concept that has not been demonstrated to the full extent and is hard for Asian consumers to grasp when they have no experience of this in their own lifestyles. The act of value communication will be addressed in various ways in the final concept, underlining the stories and delivering the messages in an interactive and engaging method.

These drivers have inspired a multi-part concept that works together to educate the consumer and address these issues. A redesigned customer journey is at the core, which leverages the digital platform and enriches the retail experience, while an initiative that will support this redesigned customer journey and its identified values is also proposed.

20. A display showing the process of making a glass bird at Taipei Miramar. A good way to convey the values of craftsmanship and quality.

### 7.2 Determining the Outcome

The three identified design drivers have been considered when redesigning the Iittala customer journey, which becomes the body of the proposed concept. To maximize the customers’ cumulative satisfaction, the non-transactional stages of the customer experience must not be neglected, nor does it end after the transaction point. It includes the following 5 stages: Awareness, Consideration, Purchase, Experience, and Loyalty.

Within these stages, consumers are constantly bouncing between online and offline channels to research, compare, validate, enquire, and even to restart the sequence as a returning customer. Nielsen Global states in an article that “Driving higher adoption and usage starts when companies develop a deep understanding of how consumers are shopping and transacting in a digital world and then use that understanding to design strategies around their habits and preferences.” (Nielsen, 2016) For this reason, the new customer journey will heavily leverage the online platform to compliment the offline interactions and transactions, and not serve as a replacement. The new customer journey will also allow the platform to collect more accurate and relevant data to formulate future retail strategies, as well as promote brand loyalty and knowledge. It will reinforce the key stories of the brand, and subliminally educate the consumer on these values through intuitive online and offline interactions.

Fig. 8 The five phases of the consumer journey.



Fig. 8

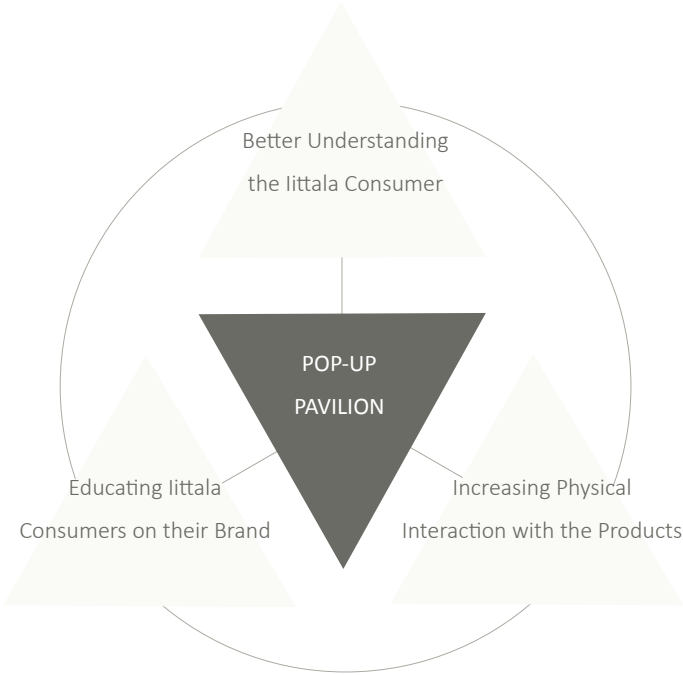


Fig. 9

### 7.3 Introducing the Iittala Pavilion

The second part of the proposed concept is in support of the launch and introduction of the digital platform. As the platform itself will require consumers to register and participate and generate data, it is important to create buzz and garner attention in the beginning stages. The “can’t-miss” attitude of the consumer is also amplified through the nature of the pop-up’s limited timeframe, therefore enticing visitors to take part and act in the moment. The pavilion will also serve towards other functions such as marketing through social media, spreading brand awareness in foreign markets, and presenting brand values in an interactive and surprising way.

Fig. 9 Diagram showing how the Pop-up Pavilion reflects the determined design drivers.



The Iittala Pavilion will focus on creating a differentiation, an emotion, and a real experience. Peter Merholz states in his article in the Harvard Business Review, “...people gravitate towards these kinds of [‘pop-up’ experiences] because of the more personal qualities they provide: getting to know the vendor”. (Merholz, 2012) By forming a connection with the target consumer through a memorable experience, the brand is engrained and forms a resonance with the consumer; and while the pavilion itself will not offer any transaction functions, this recognition of the brand will manifest itself when the need ignites for products in Iittala’s category.

Another beneficial function of the pavilion is to allow Iittala to observe and get to know their consumers and receive feedback. It is comparable to conducting an interactive workshop with the brand’s target consumers, where during their visit, the staff on site can collect comments and responses through their interactions. This showroom method acts as a learning laboratory for creating better online and in-store experiences, based on how people behave physically in person. Moreover, at such a location, the staff can apply their full attention to interacting and socializing with the visitors, as opposed to being distracted by regular store functions.

20. Brainstorming session at the workshop for generating pavilion content.



### 7.4 Generating the Pavilion Content

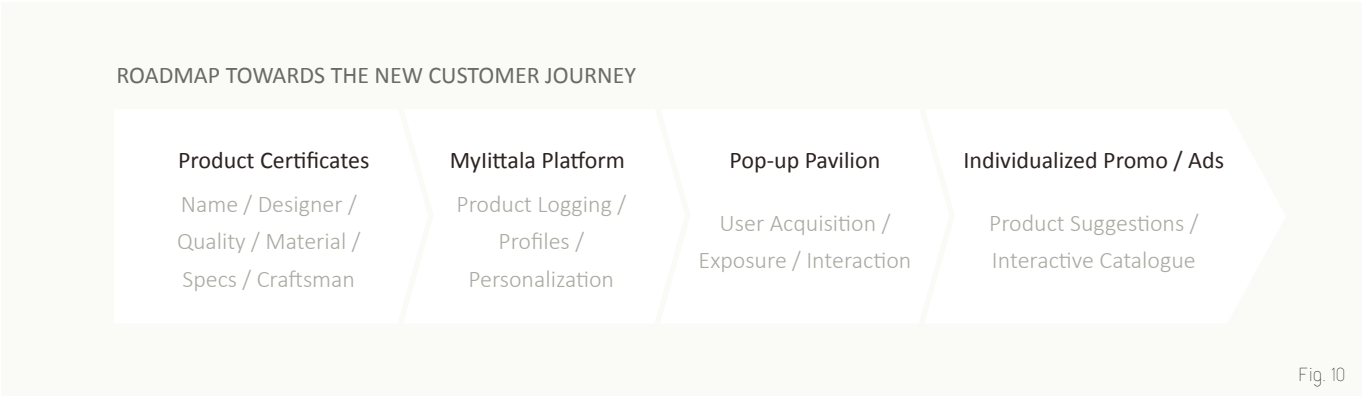
With the purpose and motivation behind the Iittala Pop-Up Pavilion determined, the content was addressed and generated through a co-creating workshop, where a program of tasks were given to extract and validate the desires for such a proposal. The participants of this workshop came from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, and all fall within the designated target consumer profile. From the workshop, it became quite clear that the pavilion needed to be somewhat of a departure from what people expect to see from Iittala. Some suggested competitions and events featuring a combination of Finnish icons (e.g, Heavy Metal Santa Clauses), while others suggested sample dinner settings arranged by Leonardo DiCaprio. While these suggestions may seem quite silly, the underlying consensus was that the pop-up needed to possess something unexpected and still convey the brand values at the same time. It was also apparent that participants did not wish to see the products as they are displayed in the retail stores, but rather in a new alternative way; the custom of displaying product series in the retail store should not apply here, but instead should present the plethora of combinations the Iittala products could offer.

The Iittala Pavilion will focus on creating a differentiation, an emotion, and a real experience. Peter Merholz states in his article in the Harvard Business Review, “people gravitate towards these kinds of [pop-up experiences] because of the more personal qualities they provide: getting to know the vendor”. (Merholz, 2012) By forming a connection with the target consumer through a memorable experience, the brand is engrained and forms a resonance with the consumer; and while the pavilion itself will not offer any transaction functions, this recognition of the brand will manifest itself when the need ignites for products in Iittala’s category.

In presenting the final customer journey concept, the individual features and the order in which they should be implemented is documented in this section. The redesigned customer journey brings together the design drivers discussed earlier, in order to provide a solution that addresses the needs identified during the consumer research.

8.1 Roadmap Towards the Solution

The resulting concept in this thesis is presented in a way that approaches the final outcome in a series of steps. The roadmap to this redesigned customer journey can and should be implemented programmatically, to allow the necessary features to fall into place before executing the next phase. The roadmap begins with the introduction of product certificates; followed by the re-launch of the Mylittala platform; then a Pop-Up Pavilion campaign to support user acquisition; and finally the ability to send personalized ads, notices, and promotions based on individual consumer profiles.



Product Certificates

The idea of the Product Certificates is derived from the craftsmanship and uniqueness of Iittala products. Due to their handmade quality, each piece of glassware is slightly varied in thickness, color, and nuances in form; on the other hand, the ceramics are all high quality and precise products, while products with lower quality grades also exist on the market through outlet stores. The certificates would be able to address the specifications, including its craftsman by name, as well as the classification and quality assurance of ceramic products. They would also serve to reinforce the product’s association with its designer, which as of now is ambiguously received in the Asia market.

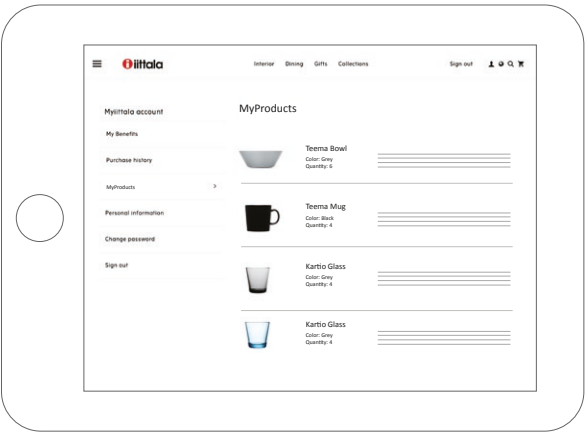
Information represented on each product certification card would include series name, product name, designer’s name, year of conception and year of manufacturing; information that could potentially be represented include product specifications (dimensions, thickness, diameter, etc.), material recipe and name of the craftsman in charge of its production. Another key component is that each card would provide a unique product number, which can later be used for product registration in the MyIittala platform.

As previously stated in the research, Asian consumers tend to view Iittala products as special or display pieces, and therefore something of a status statement. To receive these product certificates would only strengthen the values that Iittala products signify to their Asian consumers, and even allow the products to retain their monetary value in an assured method. The certificates would also contribute to a higher interest towards brand stories and production methods, which would contribute to building brand loyalty.

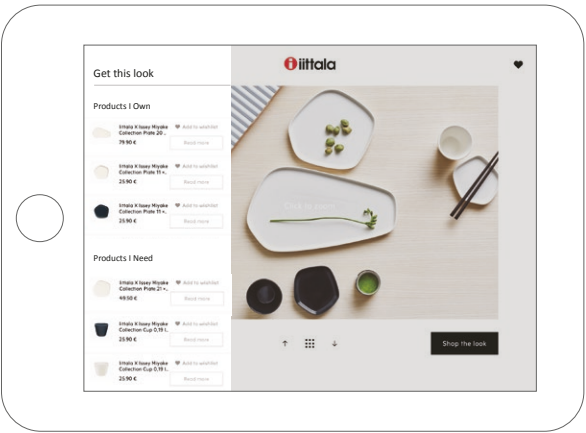
Mylittala Platform

As of present, the MyIittala program is a missed opportunity that could provide the brand and its consumers so much more. The main benefit now is the loyalty program in which purchases can accumulate to monetary discounts on future purchases. While this is a worthwhile and effective method, the MyIittala program could be transformed into an interactive and engaging platform, one that will enrich the consumer’s relationship with the brand, while providing Iittala with more knowledge concerning its consumers and their purchasing patterns.

The new MyIittala platform will allow consumers to create customized profiles, and encourage them to register products that they own. They can also shop online or add products to a wish list, all of which can be assessed in the physical store. The registering of products is of crucial intent in this redesign, which is to provide Iittala a closer understanding of their consumers and to collect data that can inform future retail strategies. This feature also creates a new layer of motivation behind purchasing Iittala products under the mentality of forming a collection. It was deemed necessary to provide this function, as many products are either purchased as gifts or abroad, so simply focusing on data fixed around physical retail locations is neither pertinent nor accurate. By viewing each customer through an individualized profile, Iittala will be able to understand local preferences, purchasing patterns, and product combinations that can speak to consumer needs and tastes. This product registration initiative is enabled through the unique product codes described earlier in the product certificates section, however previously owned products could also be registered, just not verified, and systematically could be distinguished with data hierarchy.

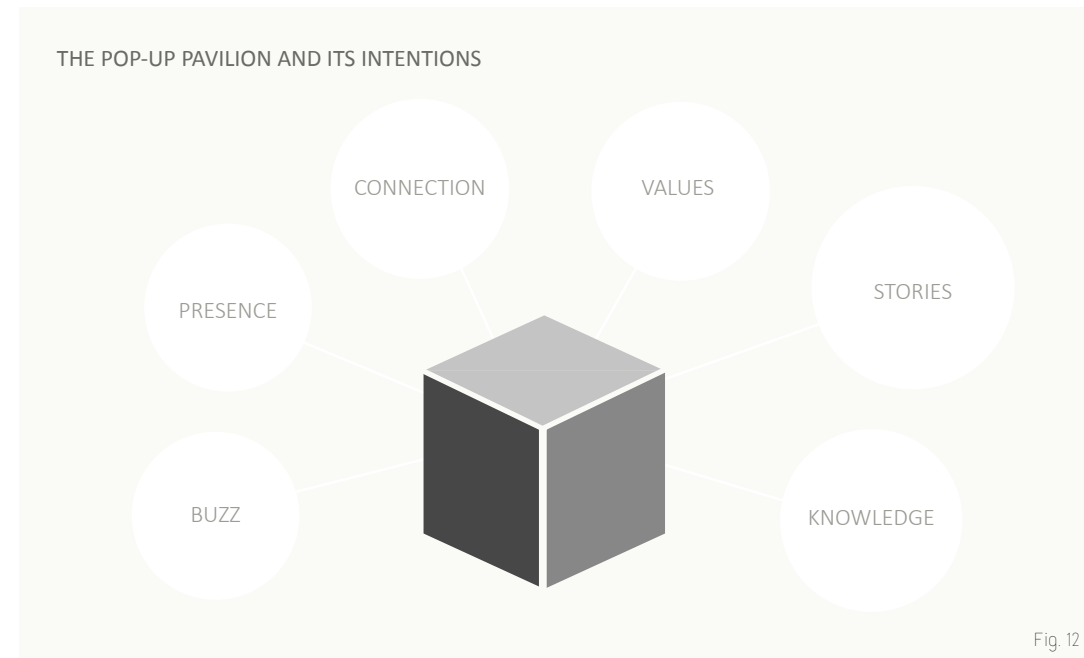


“Product Registration” Feature: Customers will be able to register their products to their profile, including gifts received or passed down. The customer will be able to build their profile and base future purchases around products they already own.



“Get The Look” Feature: When logged into the MyIittala platform, the interactive catalogue will react to the products already owned to suggest looks that the consumer could achieve or complete with a few more purchases.

Fig. 11



## The Pop-Up Pavilion

For the intentions of the new Mylittala platform to become effective, user acquisition will be crucial to generate a data pool wide enough to become informative. The proposal of the littala Pop-Up Pavilion addresses this concern by generating “buzz” and inviting visitors to register for a profile.

The Pop-Up Pavilion will not house any actual sales functions other than facilitating sales through digital devices. The purpose of the pavilion is to convey and sell the brand values in a way that is eye-catching, engaging, and makes the visitor interested in the brand. Ideally this Pavilion would travel across various locations to create volume and hype, but its most essential purpose is to start dialogues around the brand and augment Iittala's exposure in social media. Nielsen reports that, "The most credible form of advertising in China comes straight from people consumers know and trust. However trust is not confined only to those in the inner circle". Consumer opinions posted online, social media and other digital channels are among the highest trusted forms of advertising. (Nielsen, 2015)

### Individualized Ads / Notices / Promotions

Through these previous steps, the aim is to arrive at a stage when consumers can receive individualised ads, notices, and promotions. This would include product suggestions, discounts based on product series, or even events that would suit the customer profile, all facilitated through the Mylittala platform.

Another feature of the individualized suggestions build on top of the existing interactive product catalogues on Iittala's current website, and recommend table setting or interior "looks" that the consumer can already achieve with their selection of products. The catalogue would also suggest products for purchase that would allow the consumer to complete their set in order to achieve a sample setting as displayed. This feature would greatly support the consumer's need for inspiration when looking for products to complement what they already own. It also underlines and demonstrates Iittala's brand value of offering products with versatile and ease of combinability. Consumers are able to see and understand that with a range of products from Iittala, they can fulfill many different functional and aesthetic possibilities.

Fig. 13 The Iittala Universe diagram showing elements that form the Iittala experience, including the new proposals.

**THE IITTALA UNIVERSE  
INCLUDING NEW PROPOSALS**

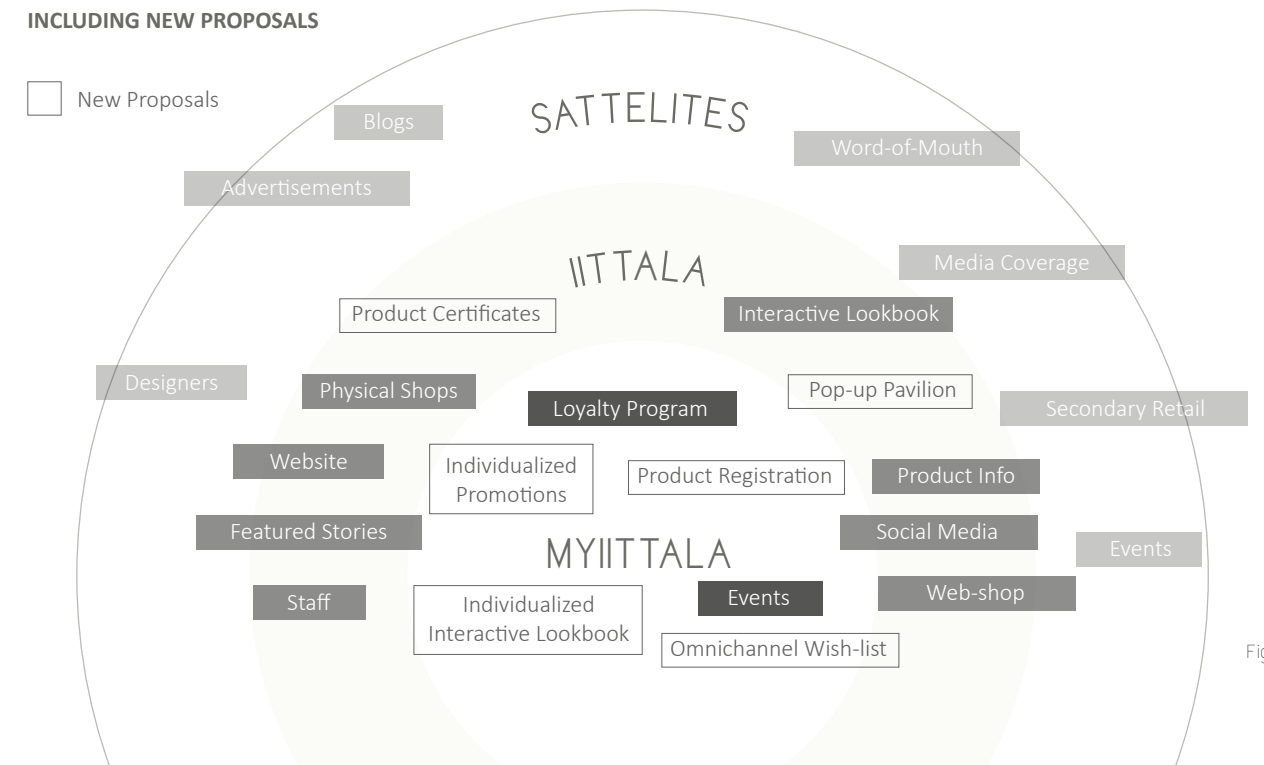


Fig. 13

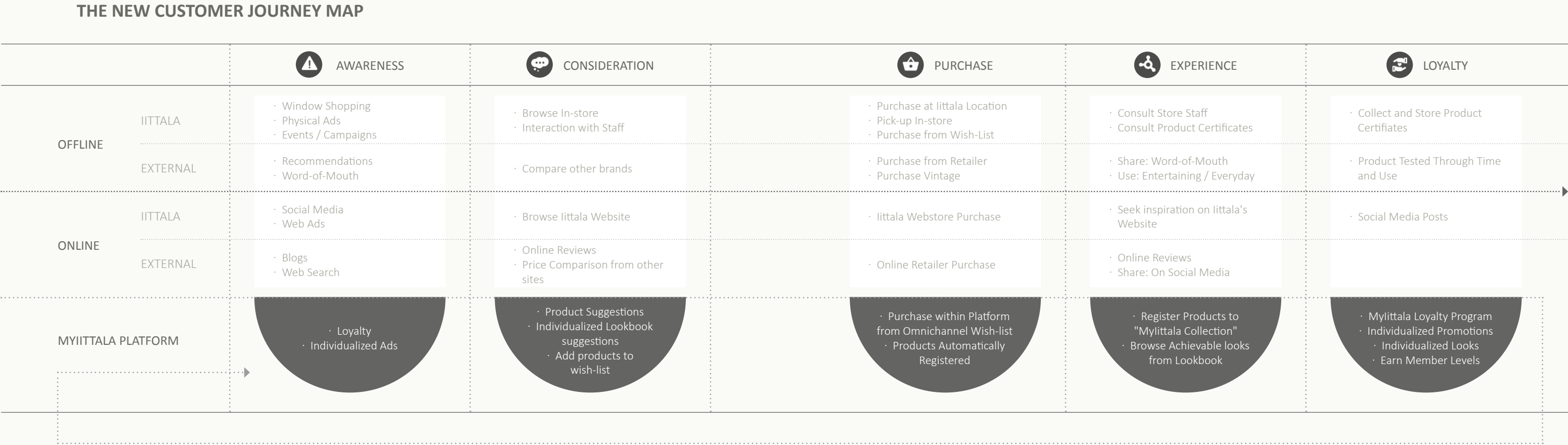


Fig. 14

8.2 The New Customer Journey

Fig. 14 A Re-designed Customer Journey Map that shows the online and offline touchpoints, as well as the implications of the new MyIittala platform proposals.

Amongst the elements of the redesigned customer journey, one of the most prominent is its capability to allow for a faster and more accurate response to consumer needs. Iittala will be able to make swifter responses to real time variables, and formulate flexible solutions that cater to consumers in their localized region. The new customer journey is illustrated in the diagram above.

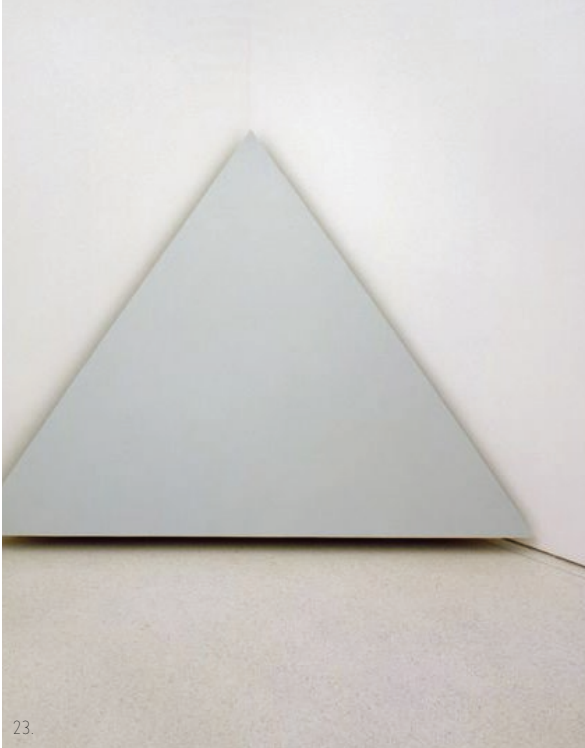
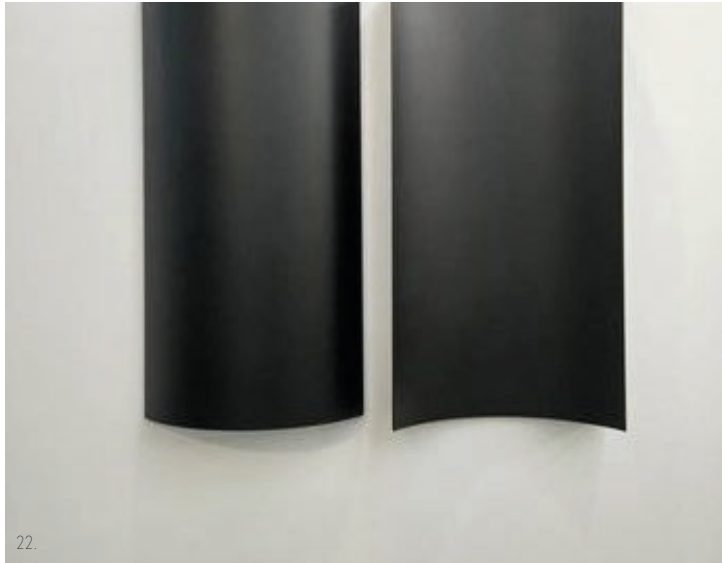
The new customer journey incorporates the MyIittala platform as an integral part of the consumer experience, adding value through all phases of the journey. The proposals that drastically affect the customer journey include the individualized promotions/ads, which builds brand loyalty; and the product certificates that facilitate the registration of products, which underline the uniqueness and value of Iittala pieces. Together, the new proposals contribute to a new customer journey that invites the consumer deeper into the world of Iittala, and forms a greater connection between brand and consumer.

9.1 The Design Brief

The design of the Iittala Pop-up Pavilion was done in collaboration with a Helsinki based studio, Yatofu Creatives Oy. The author is one of the co-founders of this studio, and enlisted the studio’s resources to support the visualization of this part of the overall concept. A design brief was given to detail the findings that led to the pavilion proposal, which covered purpose, location, and target audience. The pavilion concept design was still led by the author of this thesis.

As described previously, the purpose for this pavilion is to promote brand awareness and generate buzz around Iittala, which is crucial to success in the Asia-Pacific market. The design of the pavilion itself must uphold the brand image and values, but deliver a presence that is different, surprising, and “Instagram-worthy”. Another layer to the purpose of this pavilion is to form connections with the brand’s target consumers, and guide their perception of the products to viewing them as more approachable.





The Pop-up Pavilion is not intended for a specified location, as the point is that it could appear in multiple locations to drive higher brand exposure and user acquisition for its Mylittala platform. The site, however, has been determined as larger open areas with a heavy flow of visitors, such as public squares, shopping centre atriums, exhibition halls, etc. It is important to keep in mind the project intent of spreading brand awareness and values to international consumers, especially in the Asian market. Therefore, it is pertinent that the pop-up is appealing for consumers in cities such as Shanghai, Hong Kong or Taipei.

The primary target audiences for the pavilion are consumers who have little to no prior knowledge of the brand. These consumers could potentially be from foreign markets, and through word of mouth and social media, will stimulate the local brand hype. The secondary target audiences are consumers who are already aware of the brand but possess no brand loyalty or connection. The Pop-up Pavilion will reinforce the brand image to establish interest and loyalty, while allowing physical interaction between the staff, consumer, and product.

### 9.2 Inspiration, Colors and Materials

The inspiration behind the design of the pavilion stemmed from the realization that littala objects have the unique ability to straddle the line between functional and art objects. If this point could be conveyed properly, it would go a long way towards justifying its price point in the Asia-Pacific Market. A direction was thus formed to draw references from minimalist modern art to inform the form of the pavilion, observing the use of shapes, proportions and composition.

**Inspiration Images:**  
21. *Untitled* by Robert Morris. Image source: <http://www.tate.org.uk>  
22. *Two Series B Reliefs* by Charlotte Posenenske. Image source: <https://www.artsy.net/artist/charlotte-posenenske>  
23. *Untitled* by Robert Morris. Image source: <https://www.guggenheim.org>  
24. *Drawing #801 Wall 'Spiral'* by Sol Lewitt. Image source: <http://dowse.org.nz/news/blog/2014/film-fest-2014-sol-lewitt>





25. Light Box. Image source: <https://www.superbrightleds.com>  
26. Mirrored Surface. Image source: <http://toddmerrillstudio.com>  
27. Plywood. Image source: <http://textures.com>  
28. Charcoal Surface. Image source: <http://textures.com>  
29. Polycarbonate Panels. Image source: <http://retaildesignblog.net>

30. Sketch models from the form development process.



Having established the broad direction, Yatofu Creatives worked with the author of this thesis in creating a color and material story that supports the points of emphasis as determined through the project research. The materials used were selected from the production and display of the products, using finishes like burnt charcoal, and light boxes to allow the products to stand out. Plywood with a pronounced grain, and a polycarbonate translucent material were chosen to contrast the darkness of the charcoal. The overall palate is very neutral, elected with the intent of allowing the products themselves to exist as the colourful blossoms amongst its supporting foliage.

### 9.3 Pavilion Concept

The design of the pavilion was completed in collaboration with Yatofu Creatives, and involves a single structure composed of two complementary elements. The geometric volume houses the interior space, while the sweeping organic surface –which serves as a reference to Aalto’s Savoy Vase– envelops the open air space.

The interior of the volume is clad in dark charcoal surfaces, and is designed to be very heavy and rough as a salute to the conditions under which these beautiful and delicate glass objects were made. It forms a contrast with the smooth and transparent surfaces of the littala objects, which emphasizes the exquisite and precious qualities of the products.



31. The Iittala Pop-Up Pavilion Structure

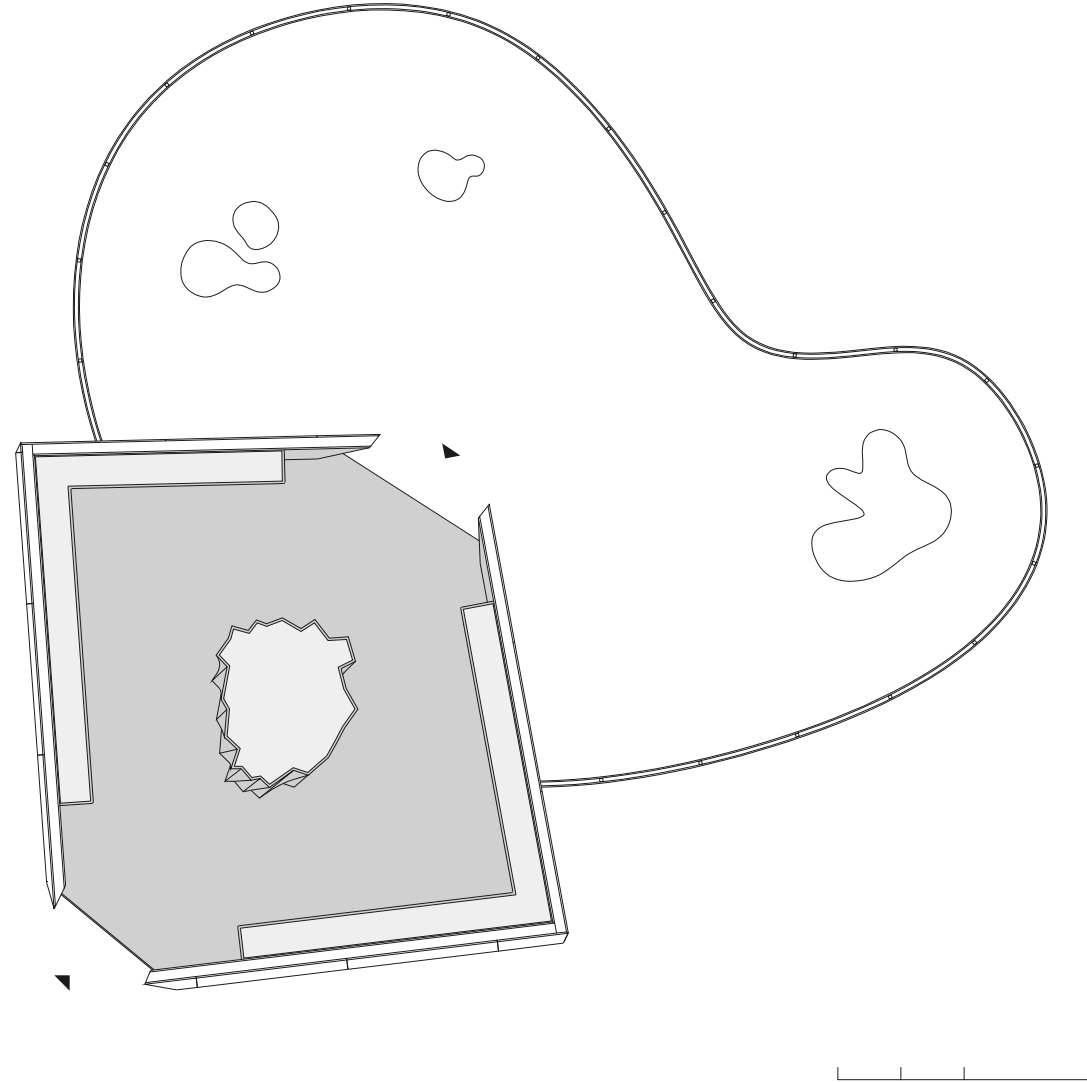


Fig. 15

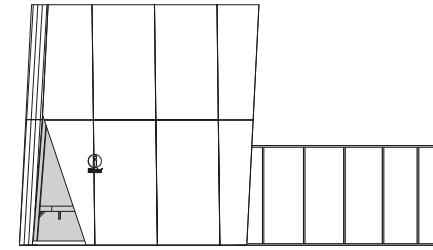


Fig. 16

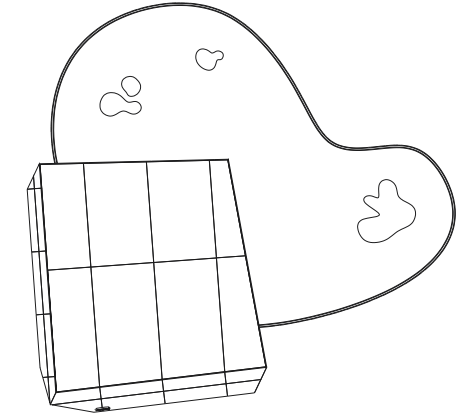


Fig. 17

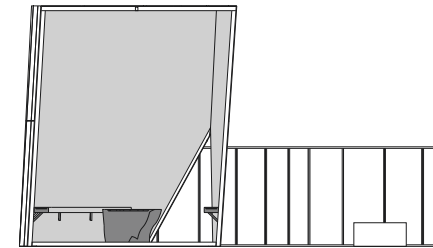


Fig. 18



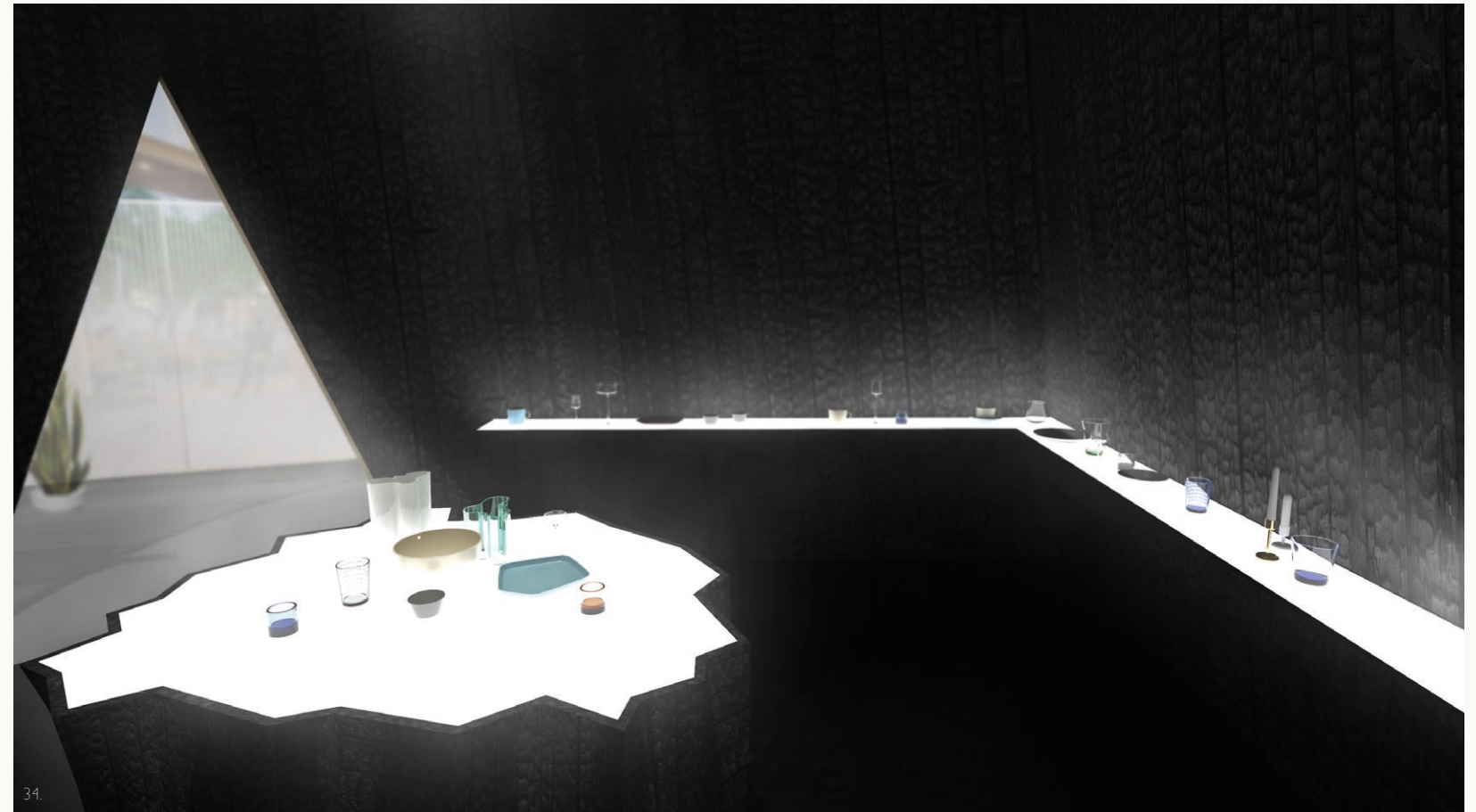
Fig. 15 Floorplan  
 Fig. 16 Elevation  
 Fig. 17 Top View  
 Fig. 18 Elevation Section

32. Detail of embedded  
 light box logo





33.



34.

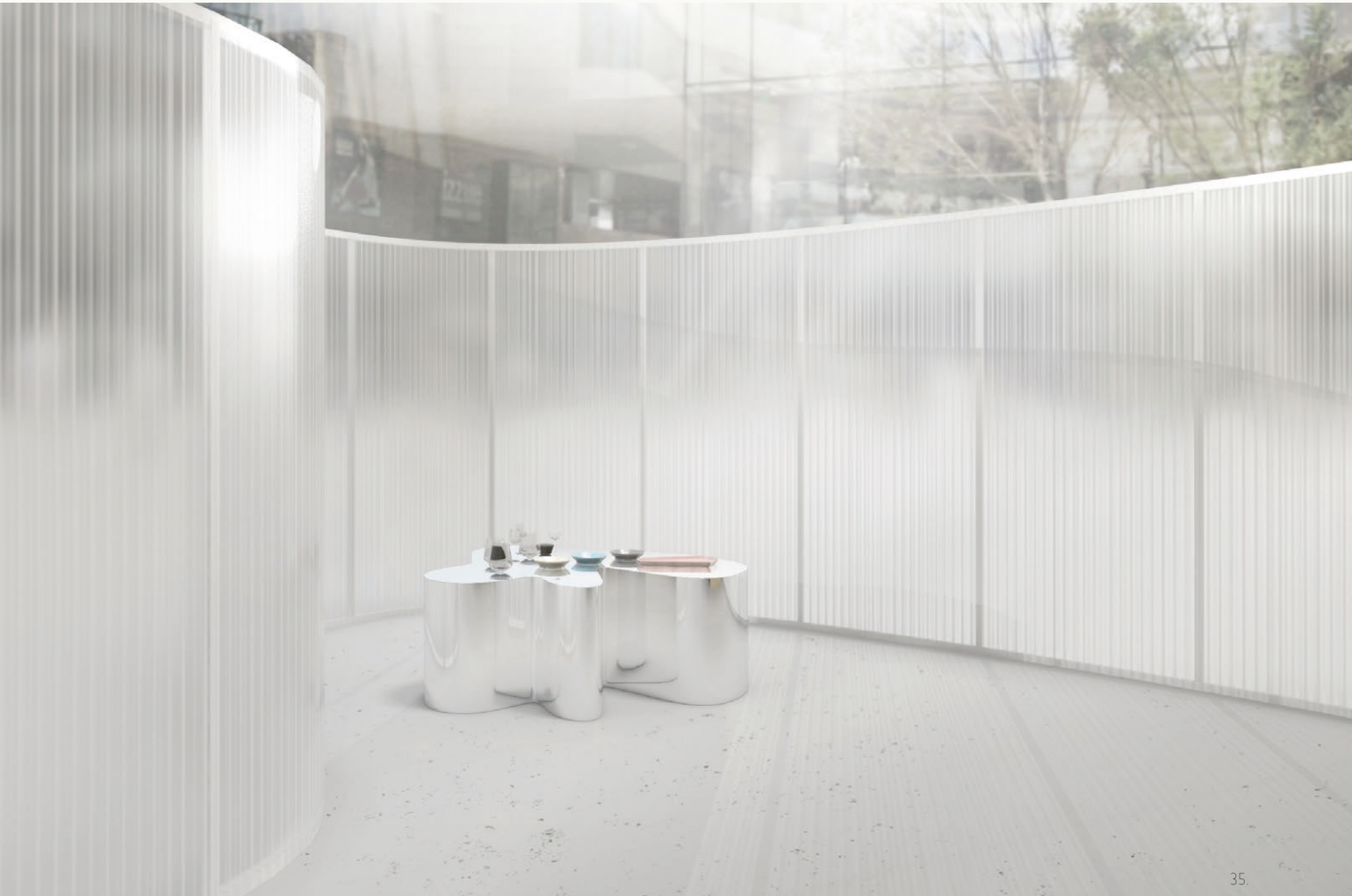
Inside this interior space, the littala objects are able to move freely, inviting visitors to make their own arrangements on the center table. This would allow the visitor to freely explore and experience the versatility of littala products, and view them as elements in a sculptural composition. The products on the surrounding table surfaces will be shown in a more organic method, changing as the visitors take or return products to arrange on the center table.

33. Pavilion interior with dramatic lighting.

34. Under-lit table surfaces allowing interactive arrangements.



The outdoor space is full of light and transparency, with Iittala product displays sparsely dotting the area. This space again draws a large contrast with the interior space, bringing the visitors into an “Iittala Garden” where the products are in full bloom.



35.

35. Translucent walls of the open-air space.

36. View from outside of the structure. The translucent surfaces reveal blurred silhouettes.



36.



37. The open-air space is an littala Garden, where the products are displayed as the flowers in bloom.

While the Pavilion is meant to surprise and engage the visitors, it is important to remember that the purpose is to connect with these target consumers and facilitate the registration to the Mylittala platform, or purchases through the webstore. Staff will be onsite with tablets to facilitate these actions, and promote the sharing of photos through social media. One method to accomplish this would be to invent a hashtag, through which littala can also track their level of exposure.

36





*The need to understand the consumers on a local level is an exemplary takeaway, as are the methods of communicating and connecting with Asian consumers.*

10.1 Exploring the Complex Retail Issues

Retailing for brands looking to expand into the Asia-Pacific market is becoming increasingly challenging and complex. In an environment where omni-channel retail solutions are a thing of the norm, and a polarized consumer market is ever-changing, foreign brands need to dig deep and readjust their outlook when formulating new retail strategies. Taking littala as a case study, this thesis demonstrated a process of understanding its new group of target consumers, while looking back into the core of their brand identity to find common ground and points of emphasis.

The key contributions of this thesis were the conclusions drawn from the survey, interviews and site visits. While the final outcome was designed specifically for littala, the deductions made from the research are applicable and essential for other brands looking to expand into the Asia-Pacific market. The need to understand the consumers on a local level is an exemplary takeaway, as are the methods of communicating and connecting with Asian consumers. For cultural and environmental reasons, the average Asian consumer possesses a very different set of priorities and desires that affects their judgement when forming their shopping decisions, and it is up to the brand to align their offerings with these discrepancies.

One crucial viewpoint offered by this thesis is the importance of human interaction in an age of the digital takeover. When technology was first used in retail, it served as a way to automate or render more efficient interactions between buyer and seller, often at the cost of connection or meaningful exchanges between the two. As Peter Merholz states, “The technologies that are succeeding don’t supplant people or make them more efficient, but instead ease transactions and encourage something that can never be replaced by machines—the conversational interaction between people.” Human interaction is becoming increasingly important in our connected world, especially when developing an effective brand awareness campaign that encourages customer loyalty. (Merholz, 2012)

Classic Iittala products are icons of Scandinavian design, and exemplify the philosophy of living a life of quality. As a brand, Iittala needs to focus on what they are known for and do well, and convey that in a method that their target Asian consumers can receive. Their brand stories of craftsmanship, authenticity, and timelessness must be upheld and not diluted in their efforts of expansion, and the key challenge is not to find a mould to fit into, but to bring the consumers into their world. This thesis would strongly suggest that the Iittala brand take a closer look at their future product development endeavours, to ensure that their new products still uphold the values on which the brand and their icons are built; and when looking to expand to other categories of the home goods market, perhaps the new peripheral developments could be launched under an Iittala sub-brand.

## 10.2 Lessons Learned

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In completing this thesis, many methods, thinking, and pedagogies have been applied. From the ethnographic nature of the interviews to the strategic implements of the final outcome, the wealth of lessons learned have been both educational and demonstrative of a design process grounded in the involvement of major stakeholders. From the very conception of the project, the determination was to maintain a certain approach to the subject, while remaining unbiased towards the actual outcome. While this kind of purpose can lead to a wider range of possibilities, it also meant that the area of study was quite broad and diverse. In hindsight, the order in which the research elements were implemented probably could have been rethought, and the topic itself could have been narrowed down through the interviews, and a more in-depth survey taken afterwards.

In regards to the outcome, it was a challenge to develop a solution that included so many parts. At its core, the final concept is the redesigned customer journey itself, however in order to fully illustrate the purpose of each new element, certain aspects have been further developed to demonstrate their implications and possible manifestation. Due to the time limitations and scope of this project, the Pavilion aspect of the concept required support, and Yatofu Creatives was enlisted in collaborating on the design of the structure, and in the final visualizations. This formed a more complicated situation as it is impossible to clearly define which party was responsible for what elements of the pavilion design; however the point remains that the purpose, brief, and direction of the pavilion structure were determined by the research and author of this thesis, and the majority of the work within the collaboration was still completed by the author.

*The realization that the smallest cultural variables could mean the biggest difference in consumer behaviour just reinforces and justifies the idea of involving stakeholders in the research process.*

All in all, this project has been extremely enlightening, and once again illustrates the power of cultural and social influences. Despite a general acknowledgment of the differences between consumers of different markets, it was extremely edifying to experience and learn of these differences in person. The realization that the smallest cultural variables could mean the biggest difference in consumer behaviour just reinforces and justifies the intention of involving stakeholders in the research process. The challenges and lessons learned through this thesis process will be beneficial for many future projects to come, as few topics escape the links with cultural associations nowadays.

### 10.3 What now?

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Many assumptions were made during this thesis to progress through the stages of research and development in a feasible manner. Since one of the purposes of this thesis is to demonstrate the process of undergoing such projects concerning brand expansion and retail experience, there were many phases where iteration and validation were forsaken due to the lack of time and resources. Should Iittala wish to proceed with the proposals made in this thesis, certain conclusions need to be tested and validated in an authentic setting.

Furthermore, the specific elements of the concept proposal all need to be individually looked at and further development. For example, features suggested for the Mylittala platform need to be explored, and the platform itself would require a separate design brief to become fully complete. The same could be said for the Iittala Pop-Up Pavilion. While the purpose and intention of the pavilion are established, the physical structure proposed is just one of many possibilities left unexplored. The actual content of the pavilion would also deserve its own round of development and proposals. In other words, while the final concept of this thesis aims to be a comprehensive solution, there are elements and features that would require more work to become definitive. By choosing to execute the process in its entirety as opposed to a specific element that is thoroughly designed, this thesis upholds its purpose in demonstration of an approach, and uncovering key points of address for success in the Asia-Pacific market. Nonetheless, the insights uncovered and the final proposal made will contribute to the possibility of realisation, and towards a more successful effort of expanding the Iittala brand into the Asia-Pacific market.

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C. APPENDIX

C.1 Survey Results

1. Age?

- < 30: 28 respondents
- 30-39: 14 respondents
- 40-49: 1 respondents
- 50-59: 6 respondents
- ≥ 60: 9 respondents

2. Gender?

- F: 31 respondents
- M: 21 respondents

3. Profession / Discipline of Study

- Design Field : 15 respondents
- Rest: 37 respondents

4. Where do you live now and what other locations have you lived in in the past?

[various responses]

In total 24 countries were represented, and even more cities were mentioned.

5. Did you know of the brand Iittala prior to this survey?

- No: 14 respondents
- Yes: 38 respondents

6. Have you ever visited a Iittala retail location. If so please describe your impression?

- No: 18 respondents
- Yes: 35 respondents

[select responses]

- clear white
- Esplanad, very classy interior
- Esplanadi, it was whatever
- Finland. Conventional Nordic design feeling, harmonous
- Helsinki, Finland. Beautiful, impressive
- Helsinki. simple and good color.
- Helsinki. Impressive.
- Helsinki. Nice.
- Helsinki: Kamppi and Arabia. I like Iittala and Finnish design, so I like Iittala shops very much.

- I don't remember which location. I remember it felt very clean and bright with bursts of colors from the products.

- I have only visited department stores with Iittala section I think

• I visited Iittala outlet in Arabia and the shops in Kamppi and Sello. I like the outlet store because there were table sets. The retail shops are also nice, but they are relatively small.

- I've been in Muurla and it was interesting to see them blow the glass and look at the items for sale.

I've been to a few Iittala shops. Can't remember where they were, but in my eyes they looked like any other home decor-shop.

- Neutral impression.
- Iitala outlet in Vantaa and iittala store in Vantaa, very nice, fresh and pure in style
- many times - many places: Helsinki, Berlin - I am not very found of contemporary Iittala design, I am focused on some old Arabia design families
- Most of shops in Helsinki. Clean environment. Sometimes nice art pieces made of their own products. Atmosphere doesn't stand out that much comparing other shops
- Yes, Fiskars Shop. The overflow of the colour white.
- Yes, Kamppi just briefly. Overall a neutral impression, nothing particular as a store.
- 去過，覺得很漂亮，喜歡玻璃杯、廚房用品、餐具等，在店裏會開心
- 有，芬蘭的可以有禮物包裝很漂亮，很乾淨明亮
- 有，規格不一

7. On a scale of 1 to 5, how interested are you in home decor. (1 meaning not at all; 5 meaning it’s one of your greatest interests)

- 1: 1 res.
- 2: 4 res.
- 3: 7 res.
- 4: 21 res.
- 5: 19 res.

8. How often do you entertain guests at home? (Hardly ever, ≤ 1-2 times a year, ≤ 1-2 times a month, ≤ 1-2 times a week, almost everyday.)

- Hardly ever: 7 resp.
- ≤ 1-2 times a year: 14 resp.
- ≤ 1-2 times a month: 26 resp.
- ≤ 1-2 times a week: 4 resp.
- almost everyday: 1 resp.

9. Do you have any knowledge on Scandinavian/Nordic Design? If yes, please give a brief description or some key words.

- No: 11 resp.
- Yes: 41 resp.

[select responses]

- A little bit. Nordic design is something like, simplistic and functional.
- Clean, simple, wood, white, glass Danish design paulsen, finnish iittala
- Consume once, use forever
- Fiskars, littala, Ikea, Marimekko, Lapponia Jewelry
- Fresh, plain and cool
- i do, i see it as simple and modest without being minimalistic
- I know pretty much about Arabia, Nuutajärvi, littala designers and their products
- I’m not sure I can name any designers but I would say I can recognize Nordic Design from other. I like the simplicity. And I think Nordic design is always of high quality.
- Ikea
- Marimekko, littala, Rörstrand and Artek represent Nordic design for me - clean and bright design with influences from the Nordic nature.
- Minimal, Craftsmanship, Clean Lines
- Minimalistic, color, prints, natural materials/elements, nature

- Simple, clean, lasting, modern
- Simple, Practical.
- Simple, warm
- Simple, wood, good for daily use, modern, textile are cute
- Simplicity, usefulness, calmness
- Simplistic, light and clear colors, nature
- Sure, design is a big thing here, the best ideas are often simple but practical.
- very timeless, simple, and functional
- Yes, general Finnish design brands like aalto products, littala products, Ikea design, Marimekko, among others (similar and original, eg. saami inspired products)
- Yes, that is rather minimalist and modern. Also beautiful shapes and materials.
- Yes. Clean lines, lot of natural colors, simplicity in a good way, puritanical
- 不清楚
- 北歐的設計簡單又大方，實用又有格調，既使使用久了也不會感到厭煩
- 北歐設計通常具有乾淨整潔的映像，以及色彩柔性且豐富。通常品質都還不錯，然後跟家裡其他東西也都很好搭配
- 有設計感 簡潔 美觀 合用
- 有設計感，有創意
- 簡單 簡潔 現代
- 簡單、明瞭、大方
- 簡約風，大方俐落

10. Please rate your design consciousness level. (1 meaning design has no effect on your purchasing decisions; 5 meaning design is the priority in your purchasing decisions.)

- 1: 3 resp.
- 2: 3 resp.
- 3: 11 resp.
- 4: 21 resp.
- 5: 14 resp.

11. Please rate your involvement in the design field. (1 meaning your professions/studies/hobbies have nothing to do with design, and 5 if design creation accounts for most of your time or efforts)

- 1: 7 resp.
- 2: 6 resp.
- 3: 15 resp.
- 4: 8 resp.
- 5: 16 resp.

12. How often do you shop or browse home accessories? (dining, lighting, decorative, etc.)

- Hardly ever: 8 resp.
- ≤ 1-2 times a year: 13 resp.
- ≤ 1-2 times a month: 20 resp.
- ≤ 1-2 times a week: 6 resp.
- almost everyday: 5 resp.

13. Where would you go to purchase home accessories and why?

[select responses]

- at the moment mostly Vintage and Antique shops. I like originality and one-of-a-kind.
- Bigger department stores for home accessories. I like the bigger variety.
- Flee market, antique shops, supermarket. Basically where ever I can find something that isn't so main stream. Even better if object has a story where it came from. Also I prefer things that hasn't been manufactured necessarily to that use
- Habitat. They have nice stuff.
- Hola
- I don't decide where. I look for something I want from Internet, and find the shop where they sell it.
- iittala
- littala and Svenskt tenn. I like their esthetics.
- littala, Artek, Ikea. Beautiful and practical.
- littala, Stockmann
- Ikea because it is cheap and the visit to the store is an experience in itself. littala outlet because they have great discount. Prisma because it's cheap.
- IKEA because of low budget
- IKEA because of the affordability... And nice design
- Ikea it's convinent

• Ikea or some cheaper shops but I consider iittala things to last longer (generations) and they are also kind of traditional. So I would buy some if i had the money and am expecting to get those as gifts anyway.

• ikea probably because its somewhat cheap and easy to find things

Ikea, because it's cheaper than the rest and I'm poor

- Ikea, cheap and reliable.
- Ikea, Hola,
- Most at the local stores depending on where I live. Sometimes from travelling.
- Murano, littala, Vallila Interior
- Never really buy things to decorate
- Nitori, muji, and ikea. Cheap and easy.
- Online
- online because of the price
- Online tis simple
- online. I think Shanghai is still missing some mid-price-range lifestyle products retailers.
- Perhaps to department stores or shops in a mall, due to the convenience.
- second hand markets mostly..i like to have contact with old objects
- Stockmann for quality and H&M for cheap. Have not really looked more into this kind of products as it is not essential for a
- Stockmann or Ikea, convininet
- Stockmann, IKEA, Zarro, Finnish Design shop (webstore), HM home. All of them are either conveniently located or I know exactly what I get from them.
- Target, cheap and easy
- Various stores since they all have different things to offer
- Walmart, Bed bath and beyond -> Easy to access and large selection

- 不一定，喜歡就買
- 傢具行，因種類款式多
- 出國旅行時在百貨公司或商場。那些地方會有一些可愛或有特色的物品，與台灣常見的不同。
- 旅行，或是路過的小店。 通常居家擺飾跟回憶有點相關
- 百貨公司、旅遊景點，前者是因為有較高檔次的商品，選項也較多，後者是想留念，或者發現令人眼睛一亮的設計。
- 百貨公司或是居家飾品店
- 百貨商場/因為可以同時到別家店購物
- 百貨或賣場 。選擇性豐富

14. You are looking for a set of nice dinnerware for your home. Assuming price is not an issue, please rate the following factors on a scale of 1-5 (1 meaning the factor has no impact on your purchasing decision; 5 meaning it is an essential factor to you when purchasing).

a) product packaging

- 1: 9
- 2: 14
- 3: 19
- 4: 9
- 5: 1

b) story/history of product or brand:

- 1: 8
- 2: 10
- 3: 16
- 4: 16
- 5: 2

c) quality of raw materials and craftsmanship

- 1: 2
- 2: 2
- 3: 4
- 4: 20
- 5: 24

d) aesthetic appeal

- 1: 3
- 2: 1
- 3: 1
- 4: 11
- 5: 36

e) uniqueness

- 1: 3
- 2: 9
- 3: 8
- 4: 14
- 5: 18

f) versatility (can be used for multiple occasions or purposes)

- 1: 4
- 2: 6
- 3: 7
- 4: 16
- 5: 19

g) trendiness (how well known the brand or product is)

- 1: 11
- 2: 18
- 3: 12
- 4: 10
- 5: 1

h) in-store retail experience and customer service

- 1: 4
- 2: 8
- 3: 13
- 4: 21
- 5: 6

15. Now you are looking for a set of dinnerware to gift to someone else. Assuming price is not an issue, please rate the following factors on a scale of 1-5 (1 meaning the factor has no impact on your purchasing decision; 5 meaning it is an essential factor to you when purchasing).

a) product packaging

- 1: 2
- 2: 4
- 3: 11
- 4: 21
- 5: 14

b) story/history of product or brand

- 1: 6
- 2: 5
- 3: 15
- 4: 21
- 5: 5

c) quality of raw materials and craftsmanship

- 1: 2
- 2: 1
- 3: 5
- 4: 21
- 5: 23

d) aesthetic appeal

- 1: 2
- 2: 2
- 3: 1
- 4: 15
- 5: 32

e) uniqueness

- 1: 3
- 2: 4
- 3: 6
- 4: 24
- 5: 15

f) versatility (can be used for multiple occasions or purposes)

- 1: 3
- 2: 13
- 3: 11
- 4: 14
- 5: 11

g) trendiness (how well known the brand or product is)

- 1: 4
- 2: 9
- 3: 15
- 4: 15
- 5: 9

h) in-store retail experience and customer service

- 1: 8
- 2: 9
- 3: 11
- 4: 18
- 5: 6

16. Is there a retail brand or store in particular that you really like? It doesn't have to be a home accessories brand or store. Please state what you like about the store/brand.

[select responses]

- Artek
- BoConcept. Dark Wood. Clean lines.
- Corso Como in Jingan district has a good selection of products from various brands.
- Granit. Nice little things that you want to touch. Pure but rustic atmosphere. Contrast in colors
- Guess. Too expensive for the quality and somehow overrated as Michael Kors also.
- HAY has simple and elegant designs. Use of color I like too.
- Hugo boss cause I am boss
- huuto.net
- i like the artek store for its range of products beyond their own collection
- iittala
- Iittala, Bo concept,
- Iittala, Eva solo
- Ikea is good, cheap, close and has a wide selection. I don't consider the quality to be the best though but the price compensates for that.
- Ikea, a well designed consumer experience.
- IKEA, I like to see the whole scene of a room.



- Marimekko and Iittala are nice because they have long roots in the Finnish design. And their products have a really beautiful design.
- Marimekko, Habitat, Finnish design shop
- Muji for their simple aesthetic and quality.
- Muji store: The use of materials in the space. IKEA: The ability to see the products in use.
- “Muji, affordable, and I like the brand aesthetics, safe, simple and essential.
- I think it’s about transparency
- MUJI, IKEA, Marimekko
- Muji. Clean and simple.
- Some favorites are Granit and Pentik, although those differ between each other a bit. Granit has simple products and lean innovations, and Pentik has more “cute” and cosy things.
- Stockmann, a lot of different high quality products. Zara, good looking clothes fitting my style.
- Store: Zarro
- 哥本哈根是不錯的，還有一些日本品牌如「巢」Nest，喜歡一些精巧的設計
- 喜歡COS。因為價格跟品質還有設計都有很好的平衡。簡單現代感的設計以及店內店員都很漂亮
- 喬治傑森 。 簡約大器

17. Regarding the topic of purchasing home accessories, is there anything else you think is relevant or would like to share?

[select responses]

- Aesthetic Appeal + Not expensive + Looks expensive + Easy to access store
- customer experience is relevant as is the price
- Durability and practicability are something designers should always pay great attention to. Otherwise, go make some artworks instead then!
- For me functionality is important.
- How long we can(want to) use the product is also important for me. It’s not nice to buy something that we don’t want to use when we get old.
- How long will it last
- I think Iittala store are not very interesting when it comes to appearance. Lack of individualism. I don’t normally just stop and take a look because layout and interior just doesn’t look interesting. I go when I have something in mind and need it.
- I think the brand story and education are crucial for the Chinese market. For Iittala, the story and production of Aalto vase can be a good entry point. Collaborations with fashion brands is also another way of quickly gaining tractions.

- I think the importance of webstores is rising. If you have a shop but no online ordering availability, it gives an unprofessional image. Buying online has become so easy and most websites deliver to your door that even big items like furniture are easily bought online.
- In some cases the design aspect and Aesthetic appeal has gone overboard and the practical use of said product/item has been worsened.
- It is extremely unfortunate when the production of some product families stop. It is understandable, but it would be important to communicate clearly in advance and provide an opportunity to order all missing parts in one go prior. Young people start collecting and if they cannot get a complete set there is great disappointment and dissatisfaction.
- practical needs
- Product incentives are great...giving back to a community with proceeds from the product. Promoting local design and materials is important.
- Since it is not an essential thing in my life at the moment it is hard to comment for my future thoughts. But, as I like technology and innovativeness of products I am usually drawn towards those kinds of products. Generally technologically advanced products are more appealing to me. Design is also a factor I look into more.
- 可能要考慮身材來設計某些家飾用品
- 實用性
- 服務態度
- 讓大家互相分享使用的獨特經驗

## C.2   Field Notes from Interviews

The following field notes were taken directly after the interview while reviewing the recordings of the interviews. The inter-views were conducted in either English or Mandarin, however the field notes have been taken in English as to correspond to the main text.

### Target Consumer Interviews

#### C 2.01

Name: Ian Yu

Location: Shanghai

Occupation: Furniture and Interior Designer

Age: 20-30

Notes:

- Knows the Iittala brand
- Shanghai does not have wide knowledge of Iittala brand, but he knows it from international context
- Scandinavian design is cozy, functional, clean, modern
- People don’t understand Scandinavian Design as a concept, but they can identify the aesthetic as it is a trendy one
- In Shanghai, the market is so polarized, but there is definitely a growing population that can afford to invest in home products
- Heritage is no longer such a prominent value in big cities. People seek trend and convenience through e-commerce sites such as TaoBao
- China as a market is still new to the Scandinavian design products. Companies are having a hard time finding retailers. In Shanghai, there are only two well known Designer home goods stores: Area living and Design Republic
- Shopping is a leisure activity for locals, so the in-store experience is definitely important. It builds brand knowledge and reputation

- A lot of people purchase online because the platforms are so vast and convenient. The logistics are also impressive. Most products are delivered the same day
- Large luxury stores may not have the best turnover, but they are necessary for visibility and to boost the brand image
- The “Design Heroes” aspect of Iittala’s story is interesting, granted that people know who the designers are. Some of the newer fashion collaborations may be more interesting because Fashion is a more developed market in China
- Would be a challenge to justify the costs of some of the more simple products
- Ian finds that some of the new visual materials don’t correspond to the values of the brand and read a bit confusing
- The Chinese consumers have money and are getting more wealthy, but will tend to lean towards products that are louder and more elaborate or complex
- Should be careful about locations where they sell their products. The reputation of the brand is really important
- Hay is doing well because they make their Mini-Market concept accessible

#### C 2.02

Name: Xue Feng, Lan Ma, Pei He (Group Interview)

Location: Shanghai

Occupation: Interior Designers (all three)

Age: 20-30 (all three)

Notes:

- Have not heard of the brand Iittala or can’t remember, but has seen the products in catalogues or online. Thinks maybe it is from Italy
- Thinks Scandinavian design is trendy now, simple, clean, fresh. When looking for foreign references of design products, they often look to Scandinavian Design.
- Scandinavian Design is more towards the taste of the younger generation, not so much the older.
- People in Shanghai are definitely willing to invest in home products
- Usually when looking at the Scandinavian style (furniture) many people will buy “Scandinavian style” products produced in China, or then copy the style and have them custom made (because they value the aesthetic, but not the meaning)
- Scandinavian design was at its peak a few years back, but now people are a bit bored by its simplicity, so they seek to mix Scandinavian design products with other styles to give it more character
- Feels that the new design collaborations are interesting because they know Issey Miyake. They were also interested in the Iittala village
- They feel the overall visuals of the brand are not too special, and quite ordinary of similar products. Does not stand out
- Iittala for them is on the higher end price-wise

- Feel that the feel of the product is important, especially for the simpler designs. Must be able to really feel the quality of the product in contrast to other products
- Amongst their friends, most will buy something if they have heard of the brand or have been recommended by their friends. Regardless of whether you care more about quality or price, brand reputation is the most important
- With home products, will usually see in the store, and then search for cheaper one online. For more important products or smaller products will buy from the store.

C 2.03

Name: Ian Yu, Hue Wu, Peggy Hsu (Group Interview)

Location: Taipei

Occupation: Design Project Manager, Administration, Interior Designer (respectively)

Age: 30-40 (all three)

Notes:

- Scandinavian design is really trendy in Taiwan right now. It is more acceptable than the industrial style that was popular earlier
- However, these are only trends and an aesthetic preference. Does not mean that by putting the label of “Scandinavian Design” on something will make it successful. People like to follow the crowd and trend
- Feels that many foreign design ideals that come to Taiwan don’t fit the context. They were designed for the location in which they were designed, and are not meant to be brought to another location in isolation.
- People appreciate this design style, but may not actually choose to bring it into their home
- For Iittala to come Taiwan, the product and its packaging need to be catered to Taiwan/China. Sometimes the Scandinavian design products are so simple and minimalistic, that it is hard to be accepted into the Asian market. People buy these sorts of objects to accessorize their home and become show pieces. It’s hard to justify the purchase of a minimalistic object that is not super eye-catching.

C 2.04

Name: Nina Chen

Location: Taipei

Occupation: Fashion Designer, former Marimekko Sales Associate in Taiwan

Age: 20-30

Notes:

- Knows Iittala from living in Finland previously
- Many are into Scandinavian design aesthetic, but there is a perception that it is very expensive

- Many people who buy Marimekko tableware products are afraid to use it, so put it on display, and doesn’t use it everyday
- Glass products don’t sell, and jugs don’t have lids so people don’t buy it
- 95% of customers visit the Marimekko store because they already know it
- it is important to share the lifestyle behind the products and to explain the functions
- people will find new uses for products if they don’t see how it fits into their lifestyle. For example, the egg cup is not a recognizable object in Taiwan, so it is sold as a sauce holder
- reputation and how well it’s known is important. Because then people will seek out the stores
- Marimekko uses traditional ways of advertisement. Sponsoring bloggers, and lending clothes to shows
- Will only employ guerilla marketing when launching new products
- People don’t see everyday objects as an investment into then everyday quality of life
- Culture in Taiwan have not been educated with a focus on quality of everyday life. Lifestyle is more fast-paced, and don’t know how to slow down and enjoy their quiet moments

C 2.05

Name: Kelly Lin

Location: Taipei

Occupation: Product Designer and Co-Founder of KIMU

Age: 30-40

Notes:

- Scandinavian design is getting more popular, and industrial style is on the decline
- In the design circle, Scandinavian designs are becoming really well known
- A Retailer called bei ou chu chuang is importing many Scandinavian design products into Taiwan
- Consumers don’t know exactly what Scandinavian design is. They are intrigued by it, but they mostly browse it, and do not purchase it for their home
- Scandinavian design is being pushed by interior designers
- In Taiwan, most people will want to see Scandinavian design products in person and buy it in person.
- Price is priority, then trendy, then the history or meaning. Otherwise it has to be super well-known
- Ikea is so well known that the Scandinavian design aspect must be detached from that
- Ikea has a concept store called Ikea HOUSE, where it is an experience shop and you can eat and browse there. The entire building is furnished with Ikea products, and customers eat from IKEA plates. No furniture on sale, only small products
- Feels the focus should be put on making the product very appealing in visuals, so that people want to see it in person.
- Must attract customers into the store, where the story can be told

- Experience stores are coming to Taiwan, where you have to order online
- Can look to Muji which is doing well, but also very simplistic
- The problem with some of the simpler glass objects is that people think that it is mass manufactured. Must emphasize that it is hand made and unique

C 2.06

Name: Eddie Tsai

Location: Taipei

Occupation: Owner of Design Butik, a Scandinavian Design shop in Taipei

Age: 30-40

Notes:

- Delivery date is important for Scandinavian design products. If products take a long time to deliver, people will not buy it
- The Design Butik clientele is around half interior designers, and half private customers
- They emphasize the brand that they are selling, because the brand reputation itself is important. People will buy it if they have heard of it
- Iittala may not be doing so well because of lifestyle differences. Small objects like Iittala products are not necessary objects like furniture. It's hard to appeal to people who will not use them in their lives. For example people may appreciate candle holders, but they will not use it so they will not buy it
- Quality of life as a concept must be taught to consumers, and it is visible that there is an improvement in recent years
- People don't care about the designers that they don't know. Only ones that they know or have heard of through the media or through friends
- Must emphasize that Scandinavian design is accessible, and not to be presented as some unachievable object
- Taiwanese consumers don't have the patience to truly understand the stories and meaning behind the objects. Taiwanese people are in general more quick-tempered
- Consumers from Hong Kong are very fast with their purchase decisions. Their Japanese or Korean customers are not as fast with their purchase decisions
- Design Butik doesn't sell Iittala products because they seem like a bigger operation, and seem a bit unapproachable
- Iittala comes off as a colder brand, not as warm and cozy like other Scandinavian brands
- Consumers know about the brand, and people come in and ask about the brand, so it is confusing why Iittala is not doing as well as other Scandinavian brands in Taiwan. It is possible that people are choosing to purchase abroad, and people do not know about the stores domestically.
- Feels that Iittala should stay true to itself and its heritage. Just expand upon the original vision and not try to change its image for the Asian market

- People don't care about having a set of tableware; because of the way meals are eaten. Food is shared so individual settings are not necessary
- New products and product assortment are very important. One low priced item can pull an entire selection down. Or products with differing values can confuse consumers

C 2.07

Name: Mira Hassinen

Location: Stockholm

Occupation: Management

Age: 30-40

Notes:

- Shopping is a huge part of Stockholm leisure activity
- People are carrying around shopping bags from luxury brands
- Seems people who are living in higher income areas are quite impulsive when they buy since money is not a problem (more impulsive than Finland)
- Iittala is quite known, knowledge is on the same level as other comparative brands from Denmark
- Iittala is associated with quality and design
- Does not buy home good products often, but does buy products from Iittala
- Does not know competitive brands by name, but knows there are a lot out there, and can recognize products when she sees them

In-store Interviews

C 2.08

Name: Anonymous

Location: ULiving, Suzhou

Occupation: Store Manager at ULiving

Notes:

- Sales rate is around 10-15% when they have a customer flow of 100
- There is quite high knowledge of the Iittala brand in Suzhou
- Most popular products include Taika series and Savoy vase

- They are a whole building of furniture and home goods, so usually with the purchase of furniture, customers also buy small tableware
- People enquire the most about the “use” of the product. Feels the bowl sizes are confusing for their functions. Too big for rice bowl, different from chinese tableware
- Does not ask about the products as “Finnish products”, because people are more attracted to the Iittala products for its quality and design
- The glass products are still quite unique in the Chinese market; however the wine glasses are too simple for Chinese tastes, and the cookware does not sell as well
- Chinese still like more “fancy” and “elaborate” products
- Glass birds are usually bought as gifts, such as for weddings
- Feels Chinese consumers require more promotions to motivate sales
- For their consumers, they don’t feel the prices is that high, so they usually purchase in store. Don’t purchase online because there is higher quality assurance

C 2.09

Name: Mike

Location: Eslite, Taipei

Occupation: Store Manager at Iittala

Notes:

- Worked almost two years at Iittala
- 20-25 groups of consumers on weekdays, around 50 on weekends
- sales rate around 15-20%
- Glass birds and Taika are the most popular in Eslite
- Issey Miyake collection did quite well
- Wine glasses are not popular and not sell. People might look at it but they feel they need to compare
- Candle holders. Customers like how they look, but don’t buy it because Taiwanese don’t use candles in their homes
- Most of the customers come in while browsing, and have no idea about the brand
- Customers has more questions about the products themselves, but are interested by the fact that they are Scandinavian Design
- At this location people are more culturally and design knowledgeable, so they can appreciate when told products are from Finland
- Some consumer know about the brand, but didn’t know Taiwan has retail locations

- Customers who have actually heard of the designers are not the ones who will buy the products. They appreciate the products, but don’t have the budget (younger, design conscious group)
- Customers who buy are usually above 35, who have the spending power
- Advertising through magazines, newspaper
- Customers are also curious about the functions of the products, but they are pretty understanding of the lifestyle behind these products
- Buy egg cups for alcohol or tea
- Would like to see more information or concentration on promoting the designers behind the products. The store staff have to often look online for more information, because there are not enough educational materials in Chinese.

C 2.10

Name: Wei Wei

Location: Miramar, Taipei

Occupation: Store Manager at Iittala

Notes:

- Around 20-40 customers a day, with very low sales rate
- Customers have no knowledge of the brand, as it is quite new in Taiwan
- Taika series is the most popular. Mugs are the most popular, and not often bought in sets
- Their customers don’t ask many questions. Looking at products strictly on visual and quality value
- Their local clientele care more about their personal tastes, and don’t strive as much for a “trendy Scandinavian aesthetic”
- The store sales will sell the stories behind the products, but since the neighborhood has a consumer demographic of older people (generally over 50), they are not as interested in this. They don’t follow design so they also have never heard of the brand
- Brands that are competitive to Iittala: “Bei Ou Chu Chuang”
- Scandinavian Design has a growing interest in Taiwan, however it needs to be managed. The taste is still more towards friendlier and more whimsical design (Japanese, Korean). It appeals to women.
- Teema is hard to sell because it is simple and the neutral colors are not as “special”. Most Taiwanese already have dinnerware in neutral colors, so when they want to buy something special from Iittala, they are looking for something more vibrant or bold
- Issey Miyake brings interest, but feels the products don’t suit their uses, or are something they own already
- They do not get a lot of foot traffic because the mall location is more community based and are not a central hub
- Difficult to create resonance through the stories of Iittala because the interests are not there and people don’t relate to them, other than recognizing it as a trendy style.

- One phenomenon is that reputation is the most important. They like to see brand exposure through media or advertising, so that they feel everyone recognizes the brand
- In this new retail concept, there is no capability of displaying possible table arrangements
- This location is also a bit inaccessible. Customers are scared of approaching the products because they are presented in a more expensive manner. Feels that the Eslite store, although not as luxury, they are more approachable and invite the customer to interact with the products
- Selling point of Iittala products in Taiwan is that they don't go out of style, and is easy to match what you have at home.
- The hand blown glass is a selling point that makes the product unique
- Feels that the products can be promoted through online groups (Faceook) focused on cooking. They were very key in promoting for example Le Creuset products.
- "Dai gou" is very powerful in Taiwan. Someone will post on a Facebook group page the product (for example a Le Creuset pot in a certain color and certain size), and then people will place an order. The buyer will then order the total amount straight from France.
- Customers feel their basic tableware is at an acceptable price point, but the other products are a bit too expensive.
- Water glasses are not sold at this location because Taiwanese people don't like water glasses. People value function, and water glasses are only for cold beverages so they are not as functional as mugs
- Candle holders don't sell well. Sometimes sold to model houses, or bought as ash trays
- Large salad trays don't sell either because Taiwanese don't make large salads to share
- Taiwanese will not overlook function for design, unless the brand has high visibility, trendy, and has a good reputation

C 2.11

Name: Annelie Dahlström

Location: NK, Stockholm

Occupation: Store Manager at Iittala

Notes:

- Would say what sets Iittala apart from others is that the products are timeless and the designers who design the products
- Most people who come to the store already know about the brand. They come looking for Iittala products. Iittala is quite well known in Stockholm
- Within last 10 years knowledge of brand is growing
- People are drawn to the aesthetic as the products have the same appeal to Swedish as they do to Finnish. Many people do not know the history of the brand however
- Normal day visitor around 80-100. Sales rate is around 25%

- There is a lot of education to support selling of the products. There are website courses for new products, and also collected old data to educate employees on older products. The education of the staff is store-specific
- Finds that people are not reading the info tags next to the products. It is not a museum setting
- Many tourists who come don't speak Swedish or English. Then storytelling becomes difficult.
- They have a lot of regular customers, who come in whenever there are new products
- The Swedish are so loyal to the Scandinavian brands, some customers get quite upset over the relocation of manufacturing to abroad. They even make a scene sometimes in the store
- Teema, especially the white, sells very well
- Essence wine glasses sell really well year round
- Savoy Vase sells well
- Taika sold well in the beginning, but not so popular with local clientele. Some Swedish customers dislike it because it is too ornamental
- Attitude towards the brand grows more positive, because the history of the company is building on itself
- Some customers bring in cups or plates they already own to compare to the new products. Some has brought in water glasses they already have, to measure the circumference of the glasses to make sure they buy the same ones. The Kivi candleholders also can have varying base thicknesses, varying up to 2 cm. The colors also vary sometimes, due to thickness differences.
- Collaboration with Issey Miyake has received good feedback because it feels new and more future oriented
- Home décor products are not selling. The stool, the Aarre collection are not selling well.
- Customers don't notice the Aitio box shelf and Plektra stool as Iittala products. They don't see it as part of the brand
- Aarre collection is confusing for customers. They don't see them as functional objects
- Feels that the staff could use more information about the company and the products

C 2.12

Name: Holger Andersson

Location: NK, Stockholm

Occupation: Merchandiser

Notes:

- Iittala is much more well-known recently
- The products represent the people's way of socializing, and the people's history. Swedish design is more for special occasions because they haven't had a war in a long time, so design has been growing for a long time. For Iittala, a Finnish company, the functional value is much higher. The fancy dinnerware and the everyday dinnerware is the same set.
- Customers in Sweden have bigger budgets and are more willing to spend on home products



- Packaging does well in giving information about the products
- Interior décor products need to be featured more, as they are being shoved into the corners now
- Has the dichotomy of being a lifestyle product and a premium product
- Customers love the sticker logo. Sometimes they lose it and come to the store to ask for another one to put on their product
- Must explain the technical processes otherwise it could be perceived as mass manufactured
- Storytelling in the printed visuals is important, but in NK there are limitations in what signage they can use. The Iittala logo is not allowed to be displayed
- Feels Iittala’s showroom could be more visually dynamic.
- There should be a modern way of displaying traditional products
- Would be interesting to present Iittala products in different cultures

C 2.13

Name: Nikki Lindberg

Location: NK, Stockholm

Occupation: Sales Associate

Notes:

- The Nikkari tables used for display are confused for Iittala products
- The new store surfaces are difficult to manage. The aluminum shelves get scratched really easily. The glass table-tops get dirty if it is touched. Takes a lot of time to keep the store looking clean and polished. Every time a product is moved on the aluminum shelf, a scratch is made, which makes the customers not want to interact with the products
- There are web courses available, which are updated once a year. It is hard to go through these courses because they are busy during store hours, but the courses can only be accessed from store computers.
- Are not allowed to offer the MyIittala program to customers because NK has its own loyalty program

C 2.14

Name: Elisabeth Moth

Location: Illums Bolighus, Copenhagen

Occupation: Iittala Brand Representative / Sales Associate

Notes:

- Danish don’t know it as well as they used to anymore. It was better known before
- Royal Copenhagen is in the same store so the Danish prefer that to Iittala’s ceramics. However there are customers who find Iittala’s products refreshing after buying too much Royal Copenhagen

- Danish like clean lines
- Most of the customers who are drawn to Iittala are Danish, the tourists find it hard to take Iittala products home. The tourists will buy Muumin cups because they are cute and easy to bring.
- They don’t have the full selection of products, because certain products don’t sell as well
- Asian consumers are quick when they buy. They just buy it because they want it, and don’t care as much about the story
- The glass birds sell well because they are unique in Illums Bolighus
- International clientele is easier to service. Danish clientele will come back many times to compare and evaluate their purchase. International clientele are faster with their decisions
- Danish clientele can buy a larger amount of products at one time. Many come back who already own or have owned Iittala products. They want to expand their set, or to complete a set of products passed down
- Traditional Danish dining is a Fine-Dining set, a casual everyday set, and a coffee set. This is the traditional Danish way, and what Royal Copenhagen is built on
- Now the younger crowd likes to streamline and just have one set, because of lack of storage, and to save money. Iittala allows you to eat on something nice everyday
- Taika mostly sold to tourists
- Water glasses sell a lot, and in multiples
- They experience a growth in sales of products they put on the table displays to show how you can combine the products. Some even buy the entire set on display
- There are sales consultants from Fiskars that explains the history and new products that are coming. The Illums staff meet with him about every half a year to learn about all of Iittala’s brands
- There is no overall brand education planned for new employees. They learn how to run the operation, and then they learn about Iittala history and products on the spot.
- Would like a complete catalogue with products and costs
- Feels product anniversaries could be celebrated more
- The French customers are difficult because they don’t speak Danish or English. Then the sales technique becomes more about pointing at things they want
- There is a video playing on loop, showing the process of blowing glass. Customers will just stand there and watch the video.
- Feels that it would help a lot to show the different functions and combinations of the products. For example, a mug can be used to bake muffins in.
- The 19cm Teema plate has been removed, but that’s the size that everyone asks for. Traditional Danish dining requires so many different sized plates, but the modern way of living doesn’t require this anymore. In that way Iittala’s range reflect the modern Danish consumer’s needs

- Feels that Iittala should listen more to the sales staff who are selling on the floor. Now the process of employee feedback can take a very long time, and through the Fiskars representative when they meet.
- Some customers come in wanting to buy a product that their grandparents have passed down, but finds that the new products are somehow too sharp and precise. So the sales staff have to explain that now they have more precise methods of making the glass, but they are the same product.

C 2.15

Name: Maria Larsen

Location: Illums Bolighus, Copenhagen

Occupation: Retail Sales Manager at Illums Bolighus

Notes:

- Has worked for Illums Bolighus for 12 years
- Tools of engaging customers include a Illums catalogue once a year. These have become somewhat of a collectible. They also use social media, loyalty program that includes newsletters and special events.
- Clientele of tourists and locals. The tourists buy the smaller items on the ground floor
- The physical is a lot about the in-store experience, however all floor space is dedicated to sales, as the space is really valuable.
- The new interior concept of the Iittala store: There are concerns that it is less approachable. They experienced a drop in sales when campaigns started
- There is also a shortage of storage in the store. During the Christmas period they had to adjust the way products are arranged in order to house all the stock. Was very inconvenient
- The new shop interior fits the brand
- Iittala offers investment products to the younger clientele
- Important that the clients touch the products
- Feels the brand must focus on their legacy as that is the main selling point
- Maybe Iittala should think about more product revivals
- Needs to build up the storytelling and make sure their image is intact.

C.3 Workshop Agenda

DATE: 10/11/16  
TIME: 5:30pm – 9:00pm  
AGENDA DURATION: 1:57  
LOCATION: Idean Office - Lauttasaari

| ITEM | DESCRIPTION           | NOTES  | DURATION |
|------|-----------------------|--|----------|
| 1.0  | Intro                 | Introduce myself and Andy, and what we are here for.<br>Purpose: Brainstorm, ways of how we can convey the Iittala Brand   | 2 min    |
| 2.0  | Mind-shift            | Visual Presentation while participants write impressions on Post-its<br>- Show pictures from trip, Iittala visuals, Iittala video<br>- talk about what I physically accomplished on the trip<br>- Participants would write down emotions, thoughts, elements, feelings (relative or pertaining to the purpose) (impressions) | 10 min   |
| 3.0  | Clustering/Presenting | Have participants come up and present the impressions, while clustering them under the categories: “Story”, “Consumer”, Values”  | 10 min   |

|       |                            |   |        |
|-------|----------------------------|---|--------|
| 4.0   | Brief Presentation         | I’ll make a brief presentation about what my purpose is.<br>- To design a pop-up location that doesn’t sell the products, but their values<br>- We need to generate the content<br>- Show a basic visualisation (maybe on a map with possible locations)<br>- Present the values: Legacy, Versatility, Art/Unique | 5 min  |
| 5.0   | Split Teams / Assign Theme | Split participants into 3 teams, and assign each team a value<br>- Try to make teams equal  | 2 min  |
| 6.0   | Idea Generation            |   |        |
| 6.1   | Brainstorm                 | First have the teams come up to the cluster board to pick the post-its that they think relate to their “value”.<br>- Then Brainstorm ideas based on brief and value (as many as possible)   | 20 min |
| 6.2   | Develop                    | Pick 2-3 ideas to elaborate and develop<br>- Make at least 1 A3 per idea (images, text, drawings)   | 40 min |
| BREAK |                            |   |        |
| 7.0   | Presenting                 | Each participant has three votes, and they get stickers to vote the ideas they like   | 18 min |
| 8.0   | Voting                     | Each team stands to present their ideas on A3.<br>- The pin the ideas on the walls, and around 2 min per idea   | 5 min  |
| 9.0   | Results                    | Tally the votes and determine the top 3 ideas   | 5 min  |

### C.4 Pop-up Pavilion Design Brief

This is a copy of the design brief delivered to Yatofu Creatives Oy when collaborating on the structure of the Iittala Pavilion. As made clear in the text, all of the drivers and purpose were pre-determined. The collaboration was strictly concerning the actual pavilion structure

Project Name:  
Iittala Pavilion

Project Overview:  
Iittala is a well known and respected Scandinavian home goods brand, specializing in glass and table ware. Although a well known brand in its native Finnish market, Iittala has been experiencing challenges when trying to penetrate the Asian market. With little existing brand knowledge in a heavily saturated retail scene, it is imperative that brand storytelling be compelling and effective to draw a wider audience.

Through consumer and localized retail research, the idea of creating an Iittala pop-up pavilion has been solidified, to support the redesign of the company-to-customer interaction. The pop-up will have the purpose of “selling values” as opposed to selling products. It will exist to bring awareness to the brand, making it recognizable locally in the future, for each location that the pavilion will inhabit.

In a recent pop-up program workshop, a few formats of operations that will take place at the pop-up have been established. These include digital capabilities (screens, sound, etc.); an interior activity space, meaning that the pop-up should not just be an outward facing window; and some forms of product display (not for sale, but to tell the story).

The pop-up will have no sales functionalities, but can facilitate online purchases.

Visitors to the pop-up will be invited to maintain connection through Iittala by registering for MyIittala and downloading their app.

Intended Location:  
The pop-up has no set location, as the intent is that it could appear in multiple locations. However, it is important to keep in mind the project intent of spreading brand awareness and values to international consumers, especially in the Asian market. Therefore, it is pertinent that the pop-up is suitable for cities such as Shanghai, Hong Kong or Taipei.

Target Audience:  
Primary: Target Consumers who have little to no prior knowledge of the brand. These consumers are potentially from foreign markets, and will stimulate the local brand hype!  
Secondary: Consumers who are already aware of the brand but have no loyalty. The pop-up will reinforce the brand image to establish interest and loyalty.

Pop-up Key Considerations:  
The Brand itself (either the logo or other iconic images) should be very strong and visible.  
The pop-up needs to be attention grabbing and bold  
The pop-up space shall be versatile in function  
the pop-up structure needs to be constructible on a feasible budget, without requiring too much permanent interventions to the site.  
Should inspire reach on social media; Instagram-worthy!

Final Deliverables:  
The final deliverables are the design of a pop-up structure with interior and exterior renderings, as well as floorplans and drawings of potential event scenarios.  
Final image should also include colour/patter/material details in support of the concept.

Beyond the Point of Purchase:  
Conveying Brand Values Through Experiential Retailing  
A Case Study of the Iittala Brand

Angela Lin  
Master of Arts Thesis  
Product and Spatial Design  
School of Arts, Design and Architecture  
Aalto University

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